Cautiously For Carter *The Editors*

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—October 23, 1976, 60 cents

Presidential Expectations

What the Voters Want

Daniel Yankelovich

The Carter Imperative

Morris K. Udall

The McCarthy Factor

Ford's Boo-boos

In Ceaușescu's Romania

Marina Veazey on Christo's Running Fence

Thomas Szasz on Being Twice Brainwashed

Gerald Jonas on That's Entertainment, Part MCXVII

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from Washington ®
October 23, 1976

Running Hard

In a couple of weeks the pundits who are telling us now who's ahead, will suddenly be telling us about "the next four years." It will be quite a relief. So let's imagine what happens if Jerry Ford wins; and then Jimmy Carter.

If Ford wins, it's as close to certainty as politics get that he will face a Democratic Congress. Congress is presently overwhelmingly Democratic and probably will remain so. In 1974 Democrats gained 43 seats; 78 Democratic freshmen out of 79 are running again. In the House it's 290-145; in the Senate, 61-37 (plus two independents—Harry Byrd of Virginia who's to the right of McKinley, and Buckley of New York, who's to the right of Byrd). Only 33 Senate seats are up this year and major change seems unlikely.

In short, then, with a Ford win we shall have two and probably four more years of divided government: vetoes, deadlocks, stalemates; White House pulling right, Congress left. Mr. Ford from the start will be a lame duck; he has served half a presidential term and under the 22nd Amendment, can't run again. (Republicans passed the two-term restriction to spite Franklin Roosevelt's memory and it straightaway stood up and bit them; at any rate, if they had nominated General Eisenhower for a third time in 1960 he undoubtedly would have won reelection).

Being a lame duck shouldn't bother Mr. Ford much, at least not in the first two years; he's no activist anyway; it might diminish his influence a bit in the last two years as talk swings round to his successor. He might make one, perhaps two, Supreme Court appointments. And his successor . . . ? Most likely Vice President Dole; if your ideal for 1980 is Bob, vote for Jerry now.

Mr. Ford has vetoed 61 bills in two years (with 12 overrides). If elected we guess this will continue; with Democrats throwing ideas at him and the President batting them back, particularly things like health insurance, aid to cities, or anything much that threatens the established world of things as they are. In summary, Mr. Ford would seem to be an ideal four-year guardian against restless change, and nobody has put it better than he did in the first debate: "We have a Democratic Congress today, and fortunately we've had a Republican President to check their excesses with my vetoes."

Mr. Ford, we assume, would keep present economic advisers or recruit more like them; Andrew Mellon would be at home with them. *Fortune* Magazine polled executives from its list of 500 biggest corporations and found them eight to one for Ford. It is true he hasn't achieved full business recovery yet; economic indicators are down, the stock market hit an airpocket; Democratic economist Walter Heller says the economy is "wasting $150 billion a year it could have if unemployment were down, not to three percent, but only to five percent." We assume that hasn't damped the ardor of businessmen, however, for attractive, predictable, uncomplicated Jerry Ford.

So much for that. So what if Jimmy Carter wins?

It's hard to say. We'll come back to the personality question later. On party line-up the US will have, for the first time since 1968, a President and Congress of the same party; America has had a divided government, the so-called "deadlock of democracy," for 14 of the past 22 years.

Democratic Harmony

Even with united control in Washington, of course, a presidential honeymoon doesn't last long. But a lot can be done in a short time. There is a chance (at least a chance) that we would have a rare period of unusual legislative productivity. They do not come regularly under our jerky system but more often in spurts, in pulses, about once every dozen years. The Congress just over, the 94th, was the most progressive, potentially, in a decade. Its record is extraordinarily slim. This, of course, was due to the two-thirds barrier to overriding a veto. No other democracy could see its lower legislative house support a housing bill, 268-157, and fail; a 15.3-billion-dollar emergency jobs program, 277-145, and fail; a bill requiring strip mine operators to restore despoiled land, 278-143, and fail; or the Senate back a 600,000-job public works bill, 63-35, and fail. We are used to it, and take it for granted. But, to say the least, it baffles foreigners. . . .

So, maybe, the most immediate effect of a Carter victory would be to open the door for the fourth or fifth time this century to a back-up log jam of social welfare and reform legislation that might come tumbling through: health insurance, maybe (Truman urged it long ago); welfare reorganization; an energy program; desperately needed aid for the cities, and so on. The last big legislative burst was in the 89th Congress, 1965-66. That one passed the voting rights act; general aid to education; aid to mass transit; aid to cities; Medicare—other landmarks. Lyndon Johnson said that historians would call the 89th "the best Congress in the history of this nation—the Great Congress." Johnson liked hyperbole.

Campaign Overkill

Jimmy Carter could get elected and still blow it, of course. The opportunity is there. But his drive to the White House raises questions; some of his acts as candidate would damage his chances as President. The *Playboy* affair was tasteless. His ferocious attacks on Ford are strange for one who features compassion. He said, "Gerald Ford has hidden himself from the public even more than Richard Nixon at the depths of Watergate." This is dangerous overkill for a man who wants to be President of all the people.

He must plead, wheedle, cajole, persuade, explain if he hopes to lead Congress and the country into new ways. The election's final days, in fact, could stand a dash of Adlai Stevenson, the man who said "let's talk sense to the American people." He did not try to destroy adversaries as well as defeat them. He lost (nobody could beat Eisenhower) but some of his savor remains: "What counts now," he said in 1952, "is not what we are *against*, but what we are *for*. *Who* leads us is less important than *what* leads us. . . ." And he said, "There is such a thing as running so hard for an office as to disqualify yourself for it."

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Contents

3 Comment
For Carter, With Reservations
5 Have They Learned?—*Morris K. Udall*
6 Twice-Brainwashed—*Thomas S. Szasz*
8 White House Watch: Ford's Boo-boo
—*John Osborne*
10 The McCarthy Factor—*Ken Bode*
12 In Ceaușescu's Romania—*Tad Szulc*
16 What the Voters Want
—*Daniel Yankelovich*
20 Theater—*Stanley Kauffmann*
21 Film Festival Report—*Gerald Jonas*
22 A Wall That Lets You In—*Marina Vaizey*
24 Books—Reviews by *Benjamin Dunlap, Mary Ann Tighe, Robert Scholes, Edward Hirsch*
29 Reconsideration—The Mackerel Plaza
—*Max Byrd*
31 The Back of the Book
—*Roger Rosenblatt*
33 Correspondence

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For Carter, With Reservations

What the Democrats always have going for them is the Republicans: after a campaign nearly three years in the planning and one in full gear Jimmy Carter still has to count President Ford his biggest asset. That's not, of course, a guarantee of winning. Hubert Humphrey in 1968 and George McGovern in 1972 had Richard Nixon as an opponent, and they were still unable to turn that considerable advantage into victory at the polls. But Carter was, on the day of his nomination, the candidate of a unified, if not exactly enthusiastic party; and not all Democrats have been blessed with an adversary who comes across as a vestige of primordial man.

That's doubtless unfair to Gerald Ford: he cannot have risen through the ranks of the Republican leadership (which, unlike ascending to the presidency, was his own achievement) being as thick as he sometimes seems. It may be that he's intimidated by his cabinet and the shifting retinue of provincial businessmen which since Eisenhower has been a Praetorian Guard, fawning and fawned over, at the Republican White House. Was it, at last, decency that had him in the second debate come down hard on the corporate accomplices to the Arab boycott? It hardly matters: by the morrow, Elliot Richardson and the clients of the Commerce Department had panicked him into retreat. He saved face for the banks and other multinationals that pay tribute to the petroleum powers with the rights of Americans, and left egg on his own.

More serious for Ford's electoral prospects was his (mis)statement denying the Soviet boot over Eastern Europe. It's also harder to understand. A feeling for détente does not, one judges from Ford's record, come naturally to him. It was passed on, along with his job, by Nixon. Whatever arguments Ford makes for détente and the Helsinki agreements are, then, versions of those made to him by the Secretary of State. But even Henry Kissinger, who has been known to stretch a point, could not have told the President that Poland is "autonomous, independent." The argument the Secretary may well have made is the subtly more fraudulent one that détente with the Soviet Union bolsters the independence of the Warsaw Pact nations; and if that is what Ford has been persuaded to believe, it is no credit to him—but he is not alone in the belief. It's been an article of the liberal religion in foreign affairs for a generation. That's why the attack on détente does

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not trip easily off many Democratic lips.

In any case, it was neither a complicated case for détente nor a textured exposition of the Eastern European situation that Ford was trying to make in those inept and garbled phrases that have necessitated explanation, clarification, modification, melioration. What he said was simply stupid. And if the President, having discovered that there actually are 31 Russian divisions in Eastern Europe, were now to move troops against them to prove his toughness, Carter would still have him on the defensive for a blooper, a flub, a failure of articulation and of understanding.

This campaign will not be remembered for the issues it illumined. It's been marked instead by a series of gaffes: on Carter's side, the "median income" embarrassment and the *Playboy* confessions. For Ford, the Butz affair and—more serious—his rhetorical confusion between oppressed and free peoples.

It is possible to have, of course, substance in a debate on Russo-American relations. Neither Kissinger nor Ford has been candid about either the implementation of the Helsinki agreements or Soviet adherence to the SALT pact. And if the concrete benefits of détente have been exaggerated, the administration seems to regard this as a small price to pay for the Secretary's long-range vision of a world order enforced by the superpowers. Since large financial interests have found a profitable role in that vision, there's added incentive to continue to cut corners with the truth. But Carter has seen his real opportunity not so much in these issues as in Ford's momentary lapse, and that is what the Democrats will exploit. Let's be clear: Gerald Ford does understand the difference between oppressed and free peoples in Europe, and he knows by whom and where the iron curtain has been rung down. If Carter cannot resist temptation and makes suggestions he knows to be false about Ford's attitude toward communism—and then hints at promises of "liberation" he cannot fulfill—he is being more irresponsible than Ford was dumb.

One can find more than adequate cause in public policy to wish Gerald Ford retired from office.

• No administration in recent history—not excluding that of Richard Nixon—has been so mean-spirited and indifferent to the plight of poor people. Under Ford, callousness was just about elevated to a norm of the public philosophy. This was in his past; there is something principled in Ford's uncreative view of government. But it is a principle inequitably conceived and applied, creating advantages for the advantaged and leaving the rest to fend for themselves. Since the rest includes interests that are far from powerless, some have not, on balance, fared badly: even with inflation, unions have protected the living standards of their working members and tried in quite difficult circumstances to extend their coverage to the unorganized. Working people without work, however, present a different situation. Here, Ford vetoes that could not be overridden proved decisive. Schooled by the likes of Ayn Rand, Ford's economists seem less moved by human distress than by declining corporate profits and stock prices.

• Lacking a policy to deal with deteriorating cities that have absorbed a vast internal migration of job seekers and their problems, the administration has solemnly counseled parsimony—as if there were no delayed cost to leaving families without housing, cutting back school schedules and curtailing social services.

• In the two years of Ford's incumbency, the cost of medical care has escalated beyond the reach of both publicly and privately financed health plans. The best the administration has been able to do is to come up with a vague scheme for "catastrophic illness" protection that takes on the worst medical risks, which the private sector would like to be rid of in any case, and leads the big insurance companies to the government trough. It doesn't do much for the rest of the sick.

• We are no closer to a strong energy conservation and development program now three years after the oil embargo than we were when it hit us. Detroit is still building cars that drive faster than speed laws allow and are still far larger than cars anywhere else in the world. As yet, we have no adequate oil reserve for emergencies, and no comprehensive federal plan that coordinates or even calculates with accuracy our natural gas, oil, coal, solar, thermal and nuclear potential. What the administration has done is to put itself behind the energy oligopoly—owners in every technology and resource—to impede the kind of competition that might increase fuel supply.

• The care and feeding of large corporations extend beyond the oil majors. Save for a handful of show anti-trust litigations (some, like the AT&T suit, of dubious wisdom), there is scarcely a circumstance in which the administration has not equated big business interests with the common good, the bigger the business the more perfect the equation. In farm policy, under the unlamented Earl Butz, the beneficiaries were the diversified agribusiness conglomerates. These companies also benefited from the administration's *laissez-faire* attitude toward pure food and health laws. The arms manufacturers have had a privileged role carved out for them by State's method of making friends and influencing people.

• Demagogy has been the Ford reflex toward what is lumped together under the "social issue." The President's recent pandering in Mississippi to the backwoods constituency on "the right to bear arms" was the most retrograde appeal to anti-gun control opinion from high position in years. The administration's provocative actions on busing, in court and out, has been more than amply documented in these pages. A hard polemical line on crime, a harsher line on welfare and welfare recipients, the insidious identification of abortion with murder are all part of an effort to create a constituency of fear, pitting class

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against class, race against race, culture against culture.

• Nor has President Ford cleansed the CIA, the FBI, the Internal Revenue Service and other agencies of the Executive branch of personnel who have demonstrated their contempt for the people's freedoms. The administration has also frustrated all legislative initiatives to preclude such violations from happening again, as if to keep the option to violate in reserve.

• Ford's record, in bold and in detail, is a sorry one. In domestic affairs there is very little commending it to voters who expect of government not that it build the New Jerusalem or even the Great Society but that it try to uphold the rudiments of justice. *New Republic* readers know that a vote for Jimmy Carter is the only way to end the Republican occupation of the White House.

It is difficult to judge, however, how much of this litany of failure would actually be different after a Carter presidency. There is enough in the Carter record, as governor and campaigner, to make us apprehensive. It's not just the awkward memory of "ethnic purity" that does it. His failure to produce a tax-reform package promised for "after the convention" is an evasion of a tough issue on which it's always easy to score points with generalities. He has been as adept at eluding the demand for specificity on other matters. But there are some points on which he has been distressingly clear—his respect for the accomplishments of the Burger Court as an instance. In this regard, we are skeptical about one of the last-resort, "unanswerable" arguments made in support of Carter: "What about the Supreme Court?" It's not at all clear that Carter would improve on Ford's only designee, Justice John Stevens, who has, like Eisenhower appointments Brennan and Stewart, proved himself to be fairminded and unpredictably liberal.

There's much else that isn't clear, and that's because Carter has declined to give any inkling of who would people his government. Standing on privilege and precedent, he refuses to tell us whom he trusts, while asking us to trust him. It's too asymmetrical a relationship for a nation that's lived through the shocks of Vietnam and Watergate. One doesn't have to prefer the parliamentary system to believe that the people are entitled to know whom a President would bring along into power.

In Carter's case, this is especially serious: his candidacy indicates that whatever the constitutional constraints, his presidency would be a highly personal one. And our experience with such Presidents has not been happy: they have tended to appoint people—sometimes able, sometimes not—whose first loyalty was to the person of the President. John Mitchell is an extreme—but only an extreme—example of this. Had Carter projected a less fuzzy and contradictory sense of his intentions, perhaps we would not feel as strongly as we do that we are going into the polls next month with insufficient evidence *for* him.

All of these caveats notwithstanding, the prospect of another four years with Gerald Ford in the White House is quite enough to persuade us to choose Carter. That's precisely what most of our editors and staff are doing. A few will choose the Robert La Follette or Norman Thomas option, a venerable tradition in our history, and make a conscientious and responsible choice for Eugene McCarthy. In a democracy, people should not feel obliged to vote for candidates they don't want. But we suspect that even those who reject the Democratic ticket will be relieved to pick up the struggle for a more decent America, not with Ford as President but with Jimmy Carter.

Have They Learned?

Despite a strong resurgence following the second debate, the Carter bid for the presidency is encountering a persistent and troublesome obstruction that may well make this election closer than one would think. That is, of course, the McCarthy factor.

It serves memory well to recall that if a few hundred thousand good people had not chosen to sit out the 1968 election, we'd be finishing the last months of the Humphrey administration, rather than the present economic nightmare which Gerald Ford has compounded with a confused foreign policy, stagnation in the movement toward civil rights, a faltering in the attainment of a decent environment. We have today a government that has earned by its misdeeds the mistrust and contempt of many of its own people.

Let there be no mistake, I like Gene McCarthy. All of us who fought the miserable mistake in Vietnam owe this man a great debt of gratitude for that glorious moment in our history in late 1967 when no one else would carry the banner against Lyndon Johnson.

Having said that, however, I must now state my concern about the very real threat the McCarthy factor holds for Democratic success in the November 2nd election. Many Democrats cringed anew when, in Madison, Wisconsin this October, McCarthy again stated his belief that he wouldn't mind if President Ford beats Carter. Certainly that harkened back to 1968 when Brother Wallace told us there wasn't "a dime's worth of difference" between Humphrey and Nixon.

It is apparent from the rhetoric of the Madison gathering and subsequent press accounts that the core of McCarthy's support lies with the same liberals who punished Hubert Humphrey in 1968 for his hesitance to break with the President about war policy. Those same people are now critical of Carter, citing the shades of difference between his views on some key issues and his personal style.

But what troubles me now is that this hostility to

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Carter, no matter what the reason, may give us at least four more years of a Ford administration—and may be based on an apprehension that is grossly misplaced. As one who was Carter's most persistent critic during the primaries, I was never reluctant to point out the differences between us. But Jimmy Carter won the nomination fair and square.

Let me now propose a test that might assist the doubter as to why a vote for Carter might profit the country more than a vote for Ford, or a vote for McCarthy, which in several of the key states would be tantamount to a vote for the President. I ask the troubled liberal to consider the following issues.

On National Health, Ford has steadfastly opposed a comprehensive national health system. Carter, in accepting the Democratic platform, has pledged his support for a compulsory health insurance program that would bring an end to the presently deficient system of health care, which costs roughly 8.5 percent of the gross national product, but is actually deteriorating in quality. A President who actively supports national health care will get the necessary congressional action to achieve this long sought-after goal.

What about the environment? Ford's vetoes of strip mining legislation, his natural gas and off-shore drilling policies, and his goal of full-speed-ahead toward nuclear power indicate a rampant insensitivity to the environmental considerations of the nation. Carter's record as governor was laudable.

Nowhere is the difference between Carter and Ford so striking as in the area of jobs and inflation policy. Using the "old time religion" of reduced federal expenditures as the cutting edge against inflation, Ford risks a renewed round of double digit unemployment and inflation. Certainly recent economic indicators reveal the weakness of the Ford plan. Carter knows that unemployment is the real villain, that an expansionary economy must have federal assistance.

The second debate demonstrated that Carter's views on the sale of American weapons, nuclear proliferation, and the intrusion of the US intelligence apparatus to the affairs of other nations certainly is far more acceptable than those of the incumbent.

Importantly, too, the electorate must consider the fact that the next President will have at least two, and possibly three, appointments to the Supreme Court. There is no way Carter appointees could do as much damage to liberal ideals as the judges Ford would appoint. One only has to consider that gas chambers and electric chairs will be back in business before New Year's Day, thanks to the present Ford-Nixon Court.

I fear that we will deserve the everlasting contempt of history if we, by casting a vote for McCarthy, hand ourselves another term of GOP rule.

Morris K. Udall

Mr. Udall is a member of Congress from Arizona.

Patricia Hearst's Psychiatrists
Twice-Brainwashed

On September 24, 1976, Patricia Hearst was sentenced to seven years in prison on the charges of armed robbery and use of a firearm to commit a felony. That sentence was even more severe than what the prosecution had requested. In her trial, Miss Hearst was represented by one of the most famous defense lawyers in Amerca, and had a galaxy of psychiatric experts testifying on her behalf. If the outcome of her trial with their help was such a heavy sentence for her, what might have been its outcome without their help? I submit that she would have received a much lighter sentence; that, Miss Hearst was victimized, and victimized herself, twice: first by her lowly kidnappers and by her own ill-advised decision to join them in venting her resentment against her parents and her society; and second, by her lofty psychiatrists and her ill-advised decision to join forces with them in reneging on her responsibility for her crimes.

It is clear that Miss Hearst was kidnapped and hence restrained in her freedom of action; but it is equally clear that within the range of the freedom of action that remained to her, she chose to attack her parents and her society, instead of attacking her kidnappers. As a responsible adult, she had a right to make that choice and benefit from, or suffer, its consequences.

Likewise, it is clear that Miss Hearst was arrested and hence again restrained in her freedom of action; but it is also clear that within the range of the freedom of action that remained to her, she chose to listen to the advice of the lawyers and psychiatrists her parents retained to defend her, instead of listening to herself.

The question that Miss Hearst's conviction and sentencing now raises is this: did she fare so badly at the hands of the law because, as Mrs. Randolph Hearst put it, "She never had a break at all, not in the press or in the courts"? Or rather, as I believe, because she allowed herself to be victimized by psychiatrists?

To be sure, the possibility that Miss Hearst is a victim of a sort of reverse discrimination against the rich cannot be ruled out. But even to the extent that she is such a victim, the defense tactic chosen for her, and accepted by her, contributed heavily to that outcome.

Poets and playwrights have always understood that the rich and the famous invite the envy of the gods and of those who create such envious gods. Miss Hearst's fame and her family's fortune were, therefore, liabilities for her defense right from the outset. In view of that fact, and in view of the evidence the prosecution possessed to convict her, it would have been reasonable for her and for those defending her (and it is not just perfect hindsight that makes me say this) not to attract any unnecessary attention to the Hearst family's wealth and power. That would have meant avoiding a

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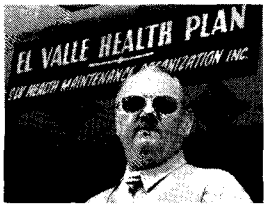

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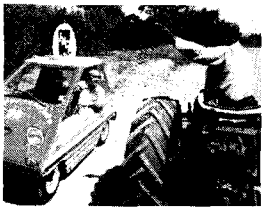

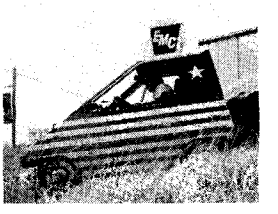

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highly dramatic, and dramatically expensive, defense. It would have also been reasonable for Miss Hearst to have acknowledged her guilt, as that would have obviated the impression, which psychiatric testimony invariably creates, that she was trying to get away with something for which an ordinary person would be severely punished. In other words, it should have been obvious to all concerned that introducing high-powered and high-priced psychiatrists into the Hearst trial might not only serve to solidify the popular prejudice that Patricia Hearst was the pampered daughter of super-wealthy parents, but that it might do something even more damaging, namely, create the impression that she was trying to cop a plea by means of a contrived psychiatric defense.

Actually, everything I assume and assert above seems to have been entertained by Miss Hearst. According to *The New York Times* (April 12, 1976), "Immediately after Patricia Hearst was arrested last September on armed bank robbery charges, she was ready to negotiate for leniency in return for a guilty plea." Why, then, didn't she plead guilty? Because "Instead, lawyers and psychiatrists began to talk with her. From those talks emerged a defense plan based on a story that pictured her as a brainwashed victim of a revolutionary conspiracy."

Psychiatrists are experts in making up stories, at their patients' expense. In the mental hospital, those stories are called "psychodynamics" and "psychopathology." In the courtroom, they are called "brainwashing" and "diminished responsibility."

As we know, the story fabricated for Miss Hearst by the doctors was exposed for the deception it was. At whose expense? Not the psychiatrists. They got their pictures in *Time*, and were paid for their efforts. The hoax of brainwashing has hurt only Patricia Hearst. That, it seems to me, is unjust.

The psychiatric advice Miss Hearst received, and which turned out to be so bad for her, raises an interesting question about the responsibility not only of Miss Hearst for following it, or of Mr. Bailey for implementing it, but also of the psychiatrists for offering it. Were the psychiatrists who advised Miss Hearst to plead "brainwashing" guilty of medical malpractice? If a physician advises a patient to follow a course of action, whether diagnostic or therapeutic, and if he does not advise the patient of both the potentially beneficial and harmful consequences that may accrue to him or her from following that advice, he is guilty of malpractice, having diagnosed or treated his patient without the patient's informed consent.

There is massive evidence to support the view that psychiatric testimony in the courtroom is a kiss of death for the defendant on whose behalf it is ostensibly employed. Was Patricia Hearst adequately apprised of the risks she was taking when she was advised to abandon her decision to plead guilty and plea bargain and accept instead the decision of the doctors to deceive the court with a psychiatric "story"? If she was not, perhaps she has a case against the psychiatrists who were so eager to save her from a punishment she herself admitted she deserved.

Thomas S. Szasz

Dr. Szasz is the author of *Schizophrenia: The Sacred Symbol of Psychiatry* (Basic Books) to be published next month.

White House Watch

Ford's Boo-boos

In preparation for his second television encounter—I refuse to call it a debate—with Jimmy Carter in San Francisco on October 6, President Ford carefully prepared himself and was carefully prepared by various assistants and advisers for correct or at least defensible answers to anticipated questions about US relationships with the Communist Peking and anti-Communist Taipei governments, the cooperation of American firms with the Arab boycott of Israel, and the US attitude toward the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe. Mr. Ford answered questions on other subjects, for which he also had prepared and been prepared, with what I thought on the whole to be competence and knowledge superior to that displayed by Carter. But, with a degree of awkwardness and ineptitude that dismayed assistants and advisers who had helped him prepare for the occasion and other associates who were hoping and praying from a distance that he'd do at least as well as he did in the first encounter with Carter, the President blew his answers to questions on the subjects cited above. In doing so, he certainly diminished and possibly destroyed whatever chance he had for election on November 2.

Mr. Ford often fumbles his words. He often says more or less than he meant to say. He has often had to confess later that he didn't mean to say exactly what he'd actually said. Never during his presidency, however, had he so completely and disastrously misspoken. A week of inquiry among some of his closest associates as to how and why it happened produced a non-answer that is summarized in a dialogue with one of the associates.

Q. So there really isn't any explanation, is that what you are saying? It just happened? He just did it?

A. That's right, it just happened. I doubt that I'll ever know why and I doubt that he will. And I'm not sure that he really knew it was happening when it happened. Believe it or not, I'm not sure he heard himself saying what he was saying when he said it.

Several other assistants responded in approximately the same way to approximately the same inquiry. The following gist of what the reporter was told about the preparations for the October encounter is not intended to explain and does not explain the President's three

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boo-boos. It adds to the puzzlement and incidentally illuminates the workings of the Ford White House.

Mr. Ford got down to specific preparation for the San Francisco confrontation with Carter much later than he did for the first one in Philadelphia. Then a replica of the Philadelphia stage was put together in the seldom used White House theater. Bill Carruthers, the President's adviser on television techniques, and Don Penny, the speech coach and intermittent contributor of gags and sharpened language who had helped importantly with preparations for the acceptance speech at the Kansas City convention, drilled him for hours in tone, posture, response. The President spent many hours over many days studying massive volumes of position papers on economic and domestic issues. The San Francisco discussion was to be confined to foreign policy and defense. After dealing with these subjects for many years in Congress and over two years in the presidency, Mr. Ford felt that there wasn't much that anybody could tell him about them that he didn't know. The showing of polls and his own sense that he'd out-performed Carter in the first encounter added to his confidence that he'd do even better in the second round. There was no further drilling in camera and speech technique. Carruthers oversaw the little there was of that part of the preparation and Penny was largely excluded. The President paid cursory attention to position papers in Washington but concentrated on them in San Francisco on Tuesday and Wednesday before the Wednesday evening event (*damned* if I'll say debate!). Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the White House assistant for national security affairs, Brent Scowcroft, spent 90 minutes with the President on the Sunday before he flew to San Francisco. Kissinger did not go to San Francisco with the President, presumably because neither of them wanted to assist Carter in promoting the notion that Kissinger conceives and runs Ford foreign policy.

Scowcroft did go. On Wednesday afternoon, a few hours before the President faced the cameras, Scowcroft pointed out to Mr. Ford that the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972, issued at the end of Richard Nixon's visit to China, included a unilateral US statement of hope that the dispute between the Peking and Taipei governments over the status and independence of the exiled "Republic of China" would be settled by peaceful means. It did not, Scowcroft reminded Mr. Ford, assert or constitute agreement between the US and Communist China that the dispute would be settled peacefully. That night Mr. Ford shook up Scowcroft and others familiar with the facts and with the President's actual knowledge of the facts when he said: "The Shanghai Communiqué does say that the differences between the People's Republic on the one hand and Taiwan on the other shall be settled by peaceful means . . . We will insist that the disputes be settled peacefully . . . as was agreed in the Shanghai Communiqué of 1972."

This was the least noticed of the President's mistakes. Another bumble that got less notice than it deserved was his misstatement of what he intended to do about American cooperation with the Arab economic boycott of Israel. The President had opposed legislation that would require disclosure and penalize past compliance with the boycott by US companies. He had indicated willingness to sign legislation that would require disclosure of future compliance. On Thursday September 30, when it was apparent that Congress was not going to enact any boycott legislation before it adjourned, the President at a staff meeting in the Oval Office instructed deputy staff chief James Cavanaugh and other assistants to draft a directive ordering Secretary of Commerce Elliot Richardson to disclose future compliance. At this meeting he emphatically restated his opposition to the disclosure of past compliance. The memo to Richardson was duly drafted for issuance and announcement in San Francisco the Tuesday preceding the television tussle with Carter. Brent Scowcroft and other assistants argued that it would be perceived for what it would be, a shoddy presidential gimmick, and urged Mr. Ford either to skip it entirely or mention it in a vague way if a questioner raised the subject. The President dragged it in with this statement: "Because Congress failed to act I am going to announce tomorrow that the Department of Commerce will disclose those companies that have participated in the Arab boycott." Richardson and others had to explain forthwith that the directive applied only to future participation and Mr. Ford falsely and unnecessarily appeared to have retreated from his original intention.

The President had been drenched for two years in the subtleties of Henry Kissinger's view that the US had to recognize the Soviet presence in Eastern Europe as a fact without either condoning or condemning it. He got a renewed dose of it from Kissinger and Scowcroft in Washington and again from Scowcroft in San Francisco. He was urged to defend the controversial 1975 Helsinki agreement—attacked by Carter and Ronald Reagan, among others, as craven recognition by the US of Soviet mastery—on the ground that it actually forbade further Soviet military aggression in Europe. Some domestic advisers considered the Kissinger-Scowcroft line much too defensive and urged Mr. Ford to be tough and aggressive.

His absurd and immensely harmful assertion that "there is no Soviet domination of Eastern Europe and there never will be under a Ford administration" overshadowed everything else said in the discussion. The thought that anyone could possibly believe that this represented his real view, after many years of outspoken denunciation of Soviet dominance, so infuriated the President that it took five days for his alarmed assistants to bring him around to a clear admission that he'd made a mistake. His personal poller,

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Robert Teeter, had small but representative samples of 125 to 130 people asked by telephone Wednesday night, Thursday morning, Thursday afternoon and Thursday night—"who do you think did the better job in the debate?" Ford led Carter by 11 points in the responses Wednesday night. Thursday and Thursday night, after the public had been saturated with news that the President had blundered, Carter led Ford first by 12 points, then by 27 points, and finally by 45 points. The fact that all sorts of people, not solely European-American "ethnics," shifted their approval from Ford to Carter caused Teeter to conclude: "The notion of ineptness, the impression that the President had made a mistake, was more important than the substance of the reference."

John Osborne

The Joker Is Wild

The McCarthy Factor

Until Jimmy Carter went into his slide, Eugene McCarthy was a frivolous candidate, not really a man to be taken very seriously. Now, however, with a tighter contest in prospect in several key states and McCarthy's standing in the polls holding relatively steady, he is being depicted in most Democratic circles as a menace to the Republic. Good citizens are being warned: a vote for Eugene McCarthy is a wasted vote. Governor Pat Lucey of Wisconsin said it was even worse than that. McCarthy brought 300 or so electors and a scattering of vice presidential candidates to Madison last weekend for a gathering of the hardcore faithful, and Lucey welcomed this event with a personal denunciation. Political purists who vote for McCarthy instead of supporting the Democratic nominee, he said, "are doing a great disservice. Every vote that is cast for McCarthy might just as well be cast for Ford."

For the past two years, the former Minnesota senator and anti-war hero has conducted his private crusade against the two-party system in America. McCarthy's main target is the armlock it holds on the presidential elections process—discriminatory ballot requirements in state after state, the Federal Communications Commission which controls access to television and thus the public's attention, the Federal Elections Commission which provides matching funds for the two parties' primary contenders and a free ride for their nominees in the general election, and, though he does not quite say it, the winner-take-all feature of the electoral college which makes it possible only for the candidates of the two parties to win.

With a total of only $300,000—contributions are supplemented by McCarthy's own lecture fees—and the aid of a nationwide battery of volunteer attorneys, McCarthy has attempted to rechart the legal road map to the presidency. At the outset, for example, there were 16 states where it was impossible for an independent to run for President, where there were simply no provisions for independent access to the ballot. Those arrangements are now unconstitutional. What George Wallace's series of 1968 court tests did for minor parties, McCarthy's has done for individual independent candidacies.

Whether this effort will have a lasting impact depends in part upon whether McCarthy achieves the necessary five percent vote nationwide to qualify for future federal funding (if, in fact, the law is interpreted so that individuals or committees as well as parties are eligible) and whether he has the capacity to follow up with further legal challenges after the election.

That is for the future. McCarthy's potential effect on this presidential election is the case in the dock.

McCarthy is now on the ballot in 30 states (including New York) representing 361 electoral votes, nearly a hundred more than the number needed for a majority. His lawyers are still fighting court battles for ballot access in another six states (including California) representing an additional 75 electoral votes. Because electoral votes are awarded en bloc in nearly every state, and because, unlike George Wallace, McCarthy's support does not reflect a strong regional base; he has no hope of winning enough electoral votes to deadlock the college or throw the election into the House.

Late September Gallup and Harris polls put McCarthy's strength at four and five percent respectively; because both polls are drawn from national samples, however, neither accurately represents his actual potential. Though McCarthy's support is not regional, it does, in fact, tend to be concentrated. In New York, he draws about nine percent in a recent *Times* poll; and in California, where he is presently not on the ballot, 10 percent of the voters recently surveyed by Mervin Field said they intended to write in McCarthy's name. Moreover, according to both Gallup and Harris, most of McCarthy's support comes from Democrats who might otherwise vote for Carter. In Gallup's surveys, with McCarthy in the race, Carter loses five points outside the South and Ford loses nothing.

In several swing states with large blocs of electoral votes—Illinois (26), Ohio (25), Michigan (21), Pennsylvania (27), New Jersey (17) and New York (41)—the contest is thought to be very close and McCarthy's presence on the ballot could draw off enough Carter support to swing the balance to Ford.

McCarthy often expresses the view that both major party candidates are sufficiently objectionable, that if his effort results in the election of Gerald Ford, he will bear no burden of conscience whatever—a statement that indicates that he understands precisely what he's doing. The national Carter campaign also understands the implications of McCarthy's efforts. Behind Pat Lucey's "a vote for McCarthy is a vote for Ford"

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greeting last week in Wisconsin was a Pat Caddell poll which showed Carter defeating President Ford in that state by a 47-to-42 percent margin without McCarthy in the race. With McCarthy included, the two are deadlocked (42-42). There are similar polls elsewhere. The anti-McCarthy effort, then, is not limited to Wisconsin. Sam Brown, Colorado state treasurer, is organizing a letter to be co-signed by some of the senator's former supporters carrying the message voiced by Lucey.

In New York, where 41 electoral votes are at stake the state Democratic party is acting as a proxy for the Carter campaign in forcing McCarthy to fight a rear guard action to stay on the ballot. To qualify as an independent candidate in that state one must file petitions with the signatures of at least 20,000 registered voters, a minimum of 100 of which must be collected in each of 20 of the state's 39 congressional districts. McCarthy filed 28,236 signatures, but his petitions were challenged wholesale on grounds that the signers or those who witnessed the signatures were not registered voters. This particular challenge seems to have failed; McCarthy is still on the ballot in New York, by order of a state supreme court judge. But the state party is preparing further legal action in an attempt to have him removed. Why the state party? One Carter staffer explains: "When Carter's delegate petitions were challenged by Henry Jackson in the primary, Jimmy called the New York system unfair and discriminatory, so we felt that if our campaign now tried to get McCarthy knocked off, someone might notice the irony." This is part of what Patt Derian, McCarthy-watcher for the Carter national staff out of Atlanta, has characterized as "avoiding the specter of a great big Carter organization bearing down all over the country on poor lone Gene." But that's what it is.

Carterites stalking the potential McCarthy voter around the country believe their prey to be ambivalent ("I have doubts about Carter, but I could never vote for Ford"), a state of mind ripe for conversion. That assumption has some solid historical grounding. Voters facing a choice between two candidates who have a realistic chance of winning (Carter and Ford) and a third, who they might prefer but who obviously has no chance to win (McCarthy), will ultimately make a second choice. From this country's limited experiences with third party candidacies, there is evidence that their popular support declines as election day nears. From a high of seven percent in early polls, Henry Wallace, candidate of the Progressive party in 1948, fell to 2.4 percent on election day, a drop-off that provided Harry Truman with his margin of victory. Similarly, in the final two months of the 1968 campaign, George Wallace's national poll ratings fell from 21 percent to his final total of 13.5 percent. Particularly outside the South, where he was thought to have no chance of carrying a state, his support evaporated.

Carter strategists believe that McCarthy will suffer the same kind of attrition, but as their New York effort indicates, they are taking no chances. "McCarthy's support will decline as the contest appears to be more and more partisan," says Carter pollster Pat Caddell. "The debates will be polarizing factors, and, in the end, people will decline to throw their votes away. They will pick between Carter and Ford," he adds.

The debates, in fact, are the one last card left up McCarthy's sleeve; he is continuing his legal effort to be included in the final debate with President Ford and Jimmy Carter on October 22, and to be awarded compensatory time for being excluded in the previous two. Last week's Supreme Court rejection of attacks on the FCC rules permitting broadcasters to televise the debates without triggering the equal time requirements for other candidates will probably have little or no effect on his case. Conceding that some rule of reason is desirable in the debates to avoid having to include dozens of frivolous candidates, McCarthy's lawyers suggest two criteria. First, they argue, a candidate should be on enough state ballots to have a theoretical possibility of winning an electoral college victory. Second, to be included, a candidate should be able to demonstrate a standing in national polls sufficient to indicate potential to meet the congressional standard of five percent needed for secret service protection and necessary to qualify for future FEC funding. McCarthy is the only candidate on the scene today who meets both criteria and he has already been assigned a secret service contingent. To confound the notion that inclusion of any but the two major party candidates would lead to an inevitable and hopeless cluttering of the format, McCarthy attorneys point out that in this century, their formulation would have required inclusion of only four other candidates—Theodore Roosevelt (1912), Robert LaFollette (1924), George Wallace (1968), and McCarthy.

The candidate and his lawyers remain optimistic that he will be ordered on, perhaps by the Supreme Court, perhaps at the last minute. That possibility led one of Carter's top advisers to state flatly that the debate would be cancelled because neither Carter nor Ford would consent to appear with McCarthy. But he is mistaken; the President would indeed show up. Most of McCarthy's campaign barbs are reserved for Carter and the polls show that Ford has little to lose in the encounter. Under those circumstances, no matter how much it violated his initial agreements with the League of Women Voters, Jimmy Carter would have little choice but to show up also. If McCarthy is included in the last debate and you're a gambler, get all the money you can spare down on Gerald Ford.

Some people won't concede that a vote for McCarthy is a vote for McCarthy. But that is exactly what it is, and that's how it will be counted. It adds nothing to Gerald Ford's totals, nothing to Jimmy Carter's. Citizens who

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really believe that either of the party nominees is unfit to govern should vote for the other candidate and make their vote go twice as far. But for many, mostly liberal Democrats, a vote for McCarthy is a political and psychological halfway house. To be sure, either Carter or Ford will win. As an alternative to staying away from the polls, a vote for McCarthy is a means of avoiding personal liability in either outcome.

Ken Bode

Glorifying Mao and the Homeland

In Ceauşescu's Romania

by Tad Szulc

Bucharest

Children between the ages of four and seven in kindergarten and the first year of primary school are being organized as "the Homeland's Falcons" as part of a sweeping nursery-to-grave program designed to regiment Romania under the twin banners of harsh Communist ideology and extreme nationalism. The "Falcons," according to a recently published plan unnoticed by the Western press, are to serve the purpose of "Early enrollment of children in the Communist educational system," the first stage in Romania's massive new indoctrination program. Blending Communist ideology with intense nationalism may violate classical Marxist-Leninist precepts, but as I learned in Bucharest earlier this month, this version of "cultural revolution"—one of the most significant political developments in Romania in decades—is closely linked to this country's traditional policy of resisting Soviet pressures.

Communizing Romania virtually on the Chinese model, President Nicolae Ceauşescu has undertaken to obtain an unprecedented degree of discipline from Romanian society and, as a reassurance to Moscow, to demonstrate that, despite the regime's independence in many fields, the nation is more faithful than ever to Communist dogmas and should be considered no ideological threat to the Soviet Union. In addition to eradicating the last vestiges of Communist "liberalism" here—this is now one of the strictest Communist dictatorships in the world—Ceauşescu has incited Romanian nationalism to an extraordinary point, presumably as a bulwark against all forms of Soviet pressure. As a dedicated Communist leader, the president has thus granted himself license to pursue his independent foreign policy and freedom to plan Romania's internal development according to his lights, and not Moscow's. This reality contrasts vividly with the campaign platitudes of the Ford-Carter television debates. As seen from this corner of the world, the dispute between Ford and Carter over Eastern Europe can only serve to upset the delicate relationships between local Communist regimes seeking their own solutions, and the Soviets.

That the Ceauşescu regime is willing to pay the price in terms of total internal communization and domestic repression—the latter worse than at any time since the late 1960s—for the implantation of an inflamed nationalism is a point that need not be hammered home by the leadership here. The current drive was launched following a bitter period of polemics about Romania's heritage last spring between officially controlled Soviet and Romanian historical journals (with Moscow firing the opening shot). Behind it was the question of the postwar Soviet annexation of Romania's Moldavian region, something Romanians have neither forgotten nor forgiven. The polemics were officially closed last June when Ceauşescu announced in a speech that "Romania has no territorial issues or issues of another nature with the Soviet Union and with the other neighboring Socialist states," the latter being a reference to the muted dispute with Hungary over Transylvania, where some two million Hungarians—the principal ethnic minority here—live under Romanian rule. That Ceauşescu even mentioned the touchy territorial problem was an unprecedented event.

This remark was delivered in the context of an unusually lengthy speech at the Congress of Political Education and Socialist Culture, in which Ceauşescu devoted most of his time to a review of Romania's "millenial" history as a nation, emphasizing as never before the importance of Romanian national identity and integrity. The "cultural revolution" was launched at the June congress, and, late in September, the ruling Executive Committee of the Communist Party's Central Committee, of which Ceauşescu is also the

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general secretary, approved the actual program for the ideological-nationalist offensive that had been drafted under his personal guidance. This program is geared to next year's celebration of Romania's centennial as an independent state. (It was formed in 1877 from ethnic areas wrested from imperial Russia and the Ottoman Empire.) Dramatizing his point further, Ceauşescu personally went to the town of Buzau to celebrate its 1600 years of "Romanian" history.

Between June and September, Ceauşescu visited the Soviet Moldavian Republic, made up of the former Romanian territories Bucovina and Bessarabia (he insisted on delivering speeches in Romanian there), subsequently flying to the Crimea for a meeting with Soviet Communist party chief Leonid Brezhnev. This led some diplomats to conclude that Romania was returning to the Soviet fold after many years of estrangement. But other events since the Crimean visit—as well as impressions I was able to gather in Bucharest—appear to negate this view even though diplomatic gossip has it that Brezhnev may turn up here this autumn for a meeting of leaders of the Warsaw Pact alliance. For one thing, the Romanian Communist party played a major role, together with the Yugoslav, Italian and Spanish parties, in forcing through the East Berlin Conference of European Communist Parties in mid-June a document that, in the view of Western European parties, formally ends Moscow's role as the ideological and power center of world communism.

The Russians may privately reject this interpretation, but the fact remains that Berlin was a watershed in Communist relationships, with Romania emerging as one of the leaders of the movement in favor of the autonomy of individual Communist parties. Afterward, the Romanians did several other things that probably displeased Moscow. Despite their membership in the Warsaw Pact, they applied for observer status with the non-aligned group of nations when the latter met last August in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

After Chairman Mao Tse-tung died last month, Ceauşescu led a party and government delegation to China's embassy in Bucharest to pay homage to him. He told the Chinese ambassador that Mao's death was "a heavy loss to both the Chinese and the Romanian people." This, of course, was in marked contrast to the Soviet reaction, confined to a brief telegram to Peking, which the Chinese rejected. To foreign diplomats in Bucharest, Ceauşescu's gesture was another proof that Romania has no intention of changing her foreign policies, much as they may displease the Russians.

In September, Ceauşescu also visited Tito in a Yugoslav mountain hideaway for one of their periodic meetings. Their joint declaration again served to underline their belief in the independence of Communist states and parties. Using language taken from the Berlin document of European Communist parties, the two presidents spoke of the "collaboration of all Communist, Socialist, democratic and progressive forces" in the world, dropping the expression, "international Communist movement," that is now taboo for Communist parties rejecting Soviet leadership. Similarly, they referred to "international solidarity" of "revolutionary parties and movements" and of "unity in diversity of all progressive and democratic forces." As did the Berlin document, Ceauşescu and Tito ignored the phrase, "international proletarianism," which remains the policy slogan of the Soviet party. The Romanian and Yugoslav presidents have not forgotten that Moscow invoked "international proletarianism" when it led Warsaw Pact armies (minus Romania) in the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia.

In a recent interview Ceauşescu granted me in his palatial office at the headquarters of the party's central committee, he repeated his support for the non-aligned movement, expressing the hope that Romania could forge closer links with it. He spoke of Romania's intense interest in trade with the West and in relations with the European Common Market, either directly or through COMECON, the Communist Common Market, which, earlier this year, submitted a series of proposals to the European Economic Community for closer cooperation. The EEC has not yet replied.

My other conversations in Bucharest reinforced the impression that Romania plans to maintain its independence in the economic field as well. I was told by senior officials that Romania rejected the Soviet concept of full economic integration in the COMECON on the grounds that it was a "forced political process" and not a spontaneous set of relationships that should be pursued by Romania in economic contacts with all the countries in the world. "A political integration will lead to a forced harmonization of interests," an official told me, "whereas Romania wishes to be free to deal with everybody everywhere." Indeed, Romania has been exercising this freedom. Her trade with the Soviet Union and other COMECON countries dropped from 53 percent of the total in 1970 to 45 percent in 1975, with all signs that this trend will continue, although Romanian officials believe it would be "dangerous" to reduce Communist commerce below 40 percent. In 1974, Romania became the second Communist country to join the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank (Yugoslavia was the first, years ago, and Vietnam was admitted this month). The bank is currently financing an industrial development project here.

Obversely, Moscow has been placing economic pressures on Bucharest. Romania has to import about 40 percent of her crude oil requirements (she produces the balance at home), but she has to buy it with her precious foreign currency at world prices in Iran and Algeria. The Soviet Union, which supplies other Communist countries with oil at some 25 percent below world prices, is not selling a single drop to the Romanians. The official explanation is that Moscow has other commitments elsewhere, but the Romanians

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From a Conversation with Ceaușescu

In a wide-ranging conversation with Tad Szulc, President Nicolae Ceaușescu of Romania discussed issues of foreign policy, party ideology, economic development and the role of the media. Below, in an official translation, are excerpts of the president's comments. —The Editors

On military détente in Europe: I have spoken of the need for a broader approach to military questions, to military disengagement and disarmament in Europe, because the strongest military forces ever known in history, including the latest weapons, are now concentrated on this continent. Therefore, the main danger of there being an outbreak of a new conflict with very serious international implications and consequences is here in Europe. That is why any progress on the road to military disengagement, to the reduction of military forces and weapons in Europe, would be a success.

As far as the Vienna negotiations on arms reduction in Central Europe are concerned, Romania has repeatedly pointed out that they are rather limited in character, and that the aims pursued there will produce no notable strides toward military disengagement on the continent. Nevertheless, we consider that even limited results would have their importance. . . .

On economic relations within and without the Communist sphere: We advocate broad international collaboration with all the states of the world, irrespective of their social system. In this framework, we are particularly active in expanding economic relations—and this includes joint production ventures—with developed capitalist countries as well. Romania's relations with the Common Market countries have produced good results. . . . But, as I have said, there are questions that have to be solved before better collaboration can be established. What I mean is the lifting of certain restrictions the Common Market imposes on the development of economic relations.

As far as collaboration with the United States is concerned, I should mention that Romania's trade with that country in 1975 was almost five times bigger than in 1970. In accordance with the understanding I reached with President Ford during his Romanian visit a year ago, we would like these exchanges to amount to about one billion dollars by 1980. The development of trade this year has shown that this objective can be attained, on the condition of course that both sides act for this purpose. Various US firms and corporations share this common interest and concern to find ways for cooperation. Therefore, what I have in mind is that no attempts should be made to erect artificial barriers—such as a cancellation of the most-favored-nation clause—and that economic relations should not be subjected to political conditions. We must set out from the principles laid down in the joint declarations made by Romania and the United States, principles of equality, non-interference in internal affairs, and reciprocal advantage.

On the Common Market: To be frank, we do not particularly like various supranational organs to interpose themselves in Romania's relations with other states. But, we cannot ignore certain realities. Therefore, recognizing the existence of the Common Market, we try to find ways to achieve collaboration with its bodies in order to remove a number of obstacles to the development of economic collaboration with the EEC member countries.

On the Berlin conference of Communist parties: The conference started from the premise that the establishment of security and lasting peace in Europe can only be the fruit of active participation by nations which can then make governments act in a new spirit, and end any interference in the internal affairs of other states and secure peaceful collaboration based on principles of full equality. In this respect, I believe that the Berlin Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties last June opened new prospects, namely a road to broader collaboration with other political forces, first of all with Socialist and Social Democratic parties, but also with other democratic parties, with Christian parties, and with all forces advocating democratic development and international peace.

On the press: I think that the press and information media everywhere represent certain classes or social groups and that, in the last analysis, they simply express the point of view of these classes or groups. A few years ago, I had a talk with the head of a British group of newspapers. I asked him how freedom of the press was expressed and how he managed his newspapers. He simply answered: Periodically, I meet with the editors and give them guidelines. If somebody makes a mistake, I draw his attention to it. After a second mistake, I fire him. This is very democratic. They have to express my point of view. This is the only way.

As regards the press in Romania, it has to express the interests of the classes in Romania—the working class, the peasantry, the intelligentsia. It has to express their outlook on life and their philosophy. We do not hide the fact that our philosophy is based on dialectical and historical materialism and, of course, on scientific socialism, which rule out oppression and inequality. . . .

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know better, referring visitors to the Soviet embassy to inquire why the Russians won't sell petroleum here.

But there are also curious contradictions in Romanian foreign policy. Romania was the only Communist state not to break relations with Israel during the 1967 Mideast war, but she was the first to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. The PLO office here was opened before one was set up in Moscow. El Al, the Israeli airline, flies regularly between Bucharest and Tel Aviv, and Romanian soldiers with automatic weapons guard El Al offices downtown as well as the Israeli embassy and the homes of Israeli diplomats. With thousands of Arab students here, the Romanians wish to avoid terrorist incidents. Thus far there have not been any.

There are other contradictions. Foreign visitors from everywhere can freely enter the country (the real problem is finding a hotel room). But Romanians are sharply restricted in foreign travel. Shortage of foreign currency is cited as the principal reason, but political considerations also play a major role: Romania does not want defectors, and, often, only one member of a family is permitted to go abroad at a time. In 1975, only 100,000 Romanians were allowed to visit the West—a small fraction of Western travel by other East Europeans—and this included official delegations and cultural groups. These restrictions are increasingly complicating the cultural exchange agreement with the United States. In October the government allowed the family of dissident writer Benedict Corlaciu to join him in Paris after he had been on a hunger strike for 27 days. An outstanding woman sculptor has been permitted to exhibit her work in Western Europe, but she cannot show it even privately to her friends in Bucharest.

For reasons unknown, Jewish emigration to Israel (there are between 50,000 and 70,000 Jews left in Romania) has been sharply curtailed this year. This is an important point because Washington has been using the level of Jewish emigration as one criterion in the annual renewal of the most-favored-nation clause in the tariff treatment granted Romanian exports to the United States. This approach annoys Ceauşescu, and he alluded to it in our conversation, saying that no political considerations should apply in the case of the "MFN" clause. On the other hand, there is total freedom of worship for Jews: government kitchens supply kosher food, and the Grand Rabbi of Bucharest is a member of the Grand National Assembly, the legislative body.

While Romania welcomes visitors, she wants them to stay away as much as possible from the citizenry. Since 1974, foreigners have not been allowed to stay with Romanian families, and even foreign ambassadors must obtain special permission to spend a night at a Romanian home. Under Ceausescu, who has permitted the rise of something of a personality cult around himself, the role of the Communist party has always been overwhelming. With two-and-a-half million members—10 percent of the population—the Romanian Communist party is proportionally the largest in Eastern Europe. Romania is the only country in Eastern Europe where signs proclaiming "long live the Communist party" are seen all over the landscape. But under this year's "cultural revolution," communization is reaching astounding depths. The entire educational system, the news media (which Ceauşescu berated in his June speech for ideological inadequacies), television, the associations of writers and poets, musical composers, painters and sculptors, and even historical museums, have been mobilized for this ideological offensive.

Political education and Socialist culture councils, acting as Communist party units, are being established in every city, municipality, commune, industrial enterprise and institution in order to draw "as broad as possible masses of working people" into the indoctrination program. The union of Communist Youth and the Young Pioneers' Organization are assigned a major ideological function among young workers and students. Small children are being incorporated into "the Homeland's Falcons" in order that, in the words of the program, "in pre-school education, love of homeland, party and people shall be bred in children, and their molding and education shall be pursued in the spirit of order and discipline, honesty and uprightness."

The plan provides for "the training and improvement of nurses working in crèches so that they, too, should fulfill educational tasks." In primary schools, the curriculum now includes themes "in the spirit of respect for the past of the struggle of our people, the working class, and revolutionary elan in Socialist construction." Because the regime emphasizes Romania's history dating back to Roman times, children starting this fall are being taught Latin. In all schools, textbooks are being revised to reflect the official concept of reality. History, according to the program, will be taught "in a new structure." In high schools, a class in "political information" will be taught every two weeks. In the universities there will be compulsory courses "on the history of the homeland and the Romanian Communist party."

As to Romanian artists, they are "to campaign for the promotion of arts and literature inspired by the peoples' Socialist ideals, by its heroic life and work, firmly based on the positions of Marxist-Leninist ideology, principles of revolutionary humanism, Socialist ethics and equity." The writers' union is charged with organizing debates on "party ideology and cultural policy, of Marxist ethics and esthetics." The composers' union is to "stimulate the production and dissemination of valuable works reflecting the spiritual features of our people, its moral beauty, its élan in building the new social system." Enesco and Ionesco, Romania's greatest composer and greatest playwright, would turn in their graves.

Romanians will also be able to watch something akin

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to Marxist soap operas on television in accordance with the party's directive for television serials to concentrate on "topical subjects, highlighting the leading role of the party in building socialism, the new man, the Communist, the participation of the masses in implementing party policy." The regime here doesn't have to worry about television ratings. There will be "revolutionary song and poetry shows" in sports halls and in the open air. Likewise, "action will be taken to develop new thematic dancing, modern ballet with an educational message." Finally, historical museums will do their share by emphasizing "the unitary character of the formation of the Romanian people . . . heroic resistance to invaders . . . liquidation of foreign domination . . . the bright prospects of Socialist Romania's future."

Ceauşescu's Communist-nationalist "cultural revolution," with the new restraints placed on the people, is thus the price Romania is to pay now for Moscow's tolerance of its relative national independence. Put another way, the new super-communism is the cover for the new nationalism that is being created as a buffer against Soviet "historical" designs on Romania.

Presidential Expectations

What the Voters Want

by Daniel Yankelovich

If you adhere to the conventional wisdom of the press—that all presidential campaigns are decided by issues or personality—you will have a devil of a time understanding the voter's frame of mind in 1976.

If the campaign were reduced strictly to a question of issues, one should be able to predict a solid victory for Carter. To the extent that any issue has dominated public concerns, it has been the economy. With the recovery now in a pause, inflation on the rise again, unemployment steady at about eight percent, some 7.5 million job-seeking Americans out of work and with an additional 2.5 million more people sliding below the poverty level in 1975—anxieties about the economy are intense. Traditionally, this should redound to Carter's benefit. The Republicans, after all, have occupied the White House for the past eight years. The Republicans, also, are conventionally perceived as the party of big business, the party least exercised about the plight of the disadvantaged. Despite all this, Carter has yet to capitalize decisively on the economic issue. Though it is of great concern to the voters, it has not worked in a conventional sense to benefit Carter. Our most recent surveys for *Time* magazine show that a majority of voters endorse the Carter position on unemployment, but they also show that rising voter concern with this issue did not help *Carter's standing in the polls*, at least not in the period just preceding and following the first debate.

While Ford's performance in the first debate impressed the voters overall more than Carter's performance did (41 percent to 28 percent), more voters actually agreed with Carter's stand on the issues than with Ford's (44 percent to 40 percent). Carter went on to "win" the second debate, but for reasons unrelated to his stand on particular foreign policy issues. In this campaign, issues have not had a decisive influence on voter preference.

Similar considerations hold for personality as a deciding factor. Much of what has been said about the debates and the campaign thus far has focused on personalities, on the need of each candidate to cultivate certain "images" reflecting the kind of person he is. Before the first debate in Philadelphia about all one heard from the Ford camp was that the President needed to be perceived as "presidential." The Carter camp has been even more preoccupied with personality. In the Bill Moyers interview on his religious beliefs, in the much-publicized *Playboy* interview and in the Norman Mailer interview for *The New York Times*, Carter clearly felt the need to let voters know about his personality. He had heard often enough that one of the most serious obstacles to be overcome in his drive for the presidency was the voters' uncertainty about what kind of a person he really is. Although for a brief period

Daniel Yankelovich, president of Yankelovich, Skelly and White, does election-year polling for *Time*.

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in late September and early October Carter was hurt by his self-exposure efforts, it was not for the reason usually supposed. Few voters were influenced by the *Playboy* interview: most of those who were turned out to be pro-Ford voters anyway. Furthermore, voters insist that Carter's religious views are not crucial—and there is every reason to believe them.

What hurt Carter was voter confusion. In dwelling on his personal life, beliefs and personality, Carter gave voters largely irrevelant information. Voters are anxious to know what they can expect from a Carter *presidency*, not from Carter as a private person. Personal traits that have little, if any, bearing on the presidency may be interesting and helpful in rounding out the picture of the man. But they are the dessert, not the meat and potatoes. Unless the voters have a fairly clear notion of the candidate's public objectives and political strengths—as they do not in Carter's case—the secondary personality considerations simply serve to confuse and divert, rather than to clarify and focus.

Nor is personality a dominant influence in Ford's case. Personally, Ford is well liked. He is seen by the voters as open, decent, likeable, friendly; as a straightforward, down-to-earth man. This favorable perception, however, has not yet been translated into a firm, decisive electoral advantage for the President. Significantly, when his supporters are asked why they prefer him, most of them (67 percent) answer by saying that they have "doubts and questions about Jimmy Carter." Ford's own personality hardly enters their calculations.

Perhaps the best way to understand this election is to think of the presidency as a job to be filled. The voters are doing the hiring: they have a set of job qualifications, as does any employer, and they are looking for the candidate who best "fits" these qualifications. This set of qualifications may not be coherently organized in the voters' minds, but it is nonetheless real, and it is based on an identifiable shift in the public mood. What this presidential criterion amounts to, finally, is a particular notion of fitness.

Fitness as defined by the voters and applied to the presidency is always a product of a particular period and national mood. This year is no exception. What is different in 1976 is that the national mood has shifted rather dramatically, and the criteria of fitness have changed accordingly. Unlike the 1950s—which saw an eager pursuit of private success—and unlike the 1960s—when no obstacle seemed too great, no problem too intractable to be overcome by the American *élan vital*—the mood today has been sobered by feelings of frustration on both the personal and national level.

People today have an all-pervasive sense that there is something wrong in the country. They feel that our political institutions are eluding democratic control; they see corruption and unfairness becoming endemic; they are distressed by what they perceive as a breakdown in social norms, heightened irresponsibility, rising criminality, the encroachment of narrow special interests on the public good. These concerns —much in the background in the 1950s and '60s—are the source of what many have pointed to as serious public disillusionment, frustration and disaffection, not just with our political system, but with virtually all major institutions.

Despite this real and deeply felt frustration, the public mood in 1976 is not defeatist or sour. On the contrary, as three studies just released by the nonprofit, nonpartisan Public Agenda Foundation indicate, Americans seem prepared to confront head-on the major sources of national distress. In analyzing public attitudes toward the economy, foreign policy and the issue of moral leadership in government, the Public Agenda's reports found, on the one hand, little of the complacency of the 1950s, and, on the other hand, not much of the nothing-is-impossible-for-America psychology of the 1960s. According to this research, people don't want to stick their heads ostrich-like into the sands of private concerns; but neither do they want to tackle problems in reckless disregard of constraints.

One of the striking shifts in the public mood between the mid-1960s and the mid-1970s has been the appearance of a national sense of restraint long taken for granted in private life—the realization that one's ambitions and desires more often than not cannot be gratified without compromise. It has dawned on people that governments, like individuals, must be guided by practicality. There is, then, a strong dose of realism in the public mood, the kind that calls for carefully defined, achievable goals and objectives and that recoils in disbelief from empty promises that cannot be filled.

Out of this new mood has emerged a concept of fitness consisting of three main components: a demand for greater moral leadership in government, a longing somehow to get things under control, and desire for a more compassionate, more responsive government. The dominant element among these is the first, which has been explored in-depth in the Public Agenda's report, *Moral Leadership in Government*. Drawing on this study, one can define the moral leadership issue according to six basic principles:

■ *Fairness.* The public is insisting that anyone who wants to be President should exhibit a firm commitment and an ability to restore fairness to all areas of our society—to taxes, jobs, education, health care, etc. People are realistic enough to understand that what they want out of government requires a heavy burden of taxation. They are not trying to escape from shouldering their fair share of the burden. But they see gross injustices in the tax structure, and they want that changed. Likewise, the public senses that there is something fundamentally unfair in a society that emphasizes the work ethic and yet fails to provide jobs to those willing and able to work. The argument that millions of job-seeking Americans must continue to

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suffer from unemployment in order to control inflation simply doesn't wash.

■ *Restoring Respect for the Law and for Moral Norms.* There is a feeling that we have suffered from a serious breakdown of the norms that have governed society and kept it stable in the past. One aspect of this breakdown, as the public sees it, has been the rise in criminality and an accompanying diminution in personal safety. The public feels strongly that something must be done to stop letting people get away with murder—literally and figuratively.

■ *Restoring a Concept of the Public Good.* As the Public Agenda's report states:

> *Americans fear that the country has been trending toward a psychology of self-interest so all-embracing that no room is left for commitment to national and community interests. They sense that we risk losing something precious to the meaning of the American experience. They fear that in the pursuit of their organizational goals, the politicians and the businessmen and the professions have lost sight of any larger obligation to the public and are indifferent or worse to anything that does not benefit—immediately and directly—themselves or their institutions. They fear that the very meaning of the public good is disappearing, drowned in a sea of self-seeking.*

■ *Involving People More in the Decisions that Affect Their Lives.* Whereas democratic government is founded on the notion that the people's will is manifest in the decisions of their elected representatives, the conviction is widespread that a broad and ever-present chasm has opened between what the people really want and what the government normally delivers. People have the idea that the government's approach to the public is fraught, at worst, with manipulation and outright lying, and, at best, with a lack of regard for what the public would like to see done. The only sure way to guard against this condition, it is widely felt, is for avenues to be opened which will allow people to participate more actively and continuously in the vital decisions that affect their lives. They recognize—and accept—a growing dependency on government, but they want more rather than less service from it. But they want government to be more responsive to those whose lives are directly affected.

■ *Redressing a Perceived Imbalance Between Rights and Responsibilities.* There is a prevalent notion that the past decade or so has witnessed a rapid expansion in individual freedoms, rights and entitlements, without an accompanying regard for individual duties and responsibilities. It is widely believed that people have come to expect too much in the way of guaranteed satisfactions, to take too many things for granted, without feeling obliged to give anything in return. As the Public Agenda's report says, the public feels that to redress this imbalance the President "should use his unique moral authority to stress citizen obligations to the community rather than individual rights."

■ *Trust.* People today are tired of being promised one thing and seeing the opposite happen. They're fed up not just with deception, but also with well-meant promises that have little chance of being kept. In recent years the bond of basic trust that ties Americans to their government has been strained to the breaking point. People hunger to have this bond repaired and strengthened, and yet, having been let down so often, they are mistrustful of those who ask for their trust without demonstrating as concretely and specifically as possible why it should be given. No issue is more important in this campaign than the matter of restoring basic trust—and showing proof that it is deserved.

The average voter does not articulate these principles precisely in this form. They are not tightly organized or coherent. But they are nonetheless real. And it is evident that they cannot be reduced strictly to a matter of issues or to a matter of personalities. It's important to note, too, that these principles have little to do with matters of private or community morality. For most voters, a candidate's specific stand on abortion, or on pornography, or on religion, is hardly relevant to the question of whether or not he can provide the kind of national leadership the voters find lacking. Like Carter's discussion of his private thoughts, the candidates' focus on abortion and similar issues does more to divert and confuse the electorate than to tell it what it really wants to know.

A key component of fitness for the presidency in 1976 is the public's desire to have a President who can somehow get things under control. People have been living for some time with a compelling unease that our society has been floundering, that it is a largely rudderless ship, tossed about by the waves of self-interest of various groups and institutions, with no course charted, no meaningful public purpose in view. People are looking for a President who can get a handle on things. They want leadership in the sense of mastery—knowing what is going on, knowing how to manage, to set priorities, to improve effectiveness.

This desire to restore a sense of control lies at the heart of the much-discussed "big government" issue. Public attitudes on this issue have for the most part been misconstrued. People are concerned not so much about the "bigness" of government as such, as with "inefficiency," its lack of responsiveness, the public belief that government and other major institutions are operating exclusively in their own self-interests without consideration of the public good. People know that they cannot by themselves, as private citizens, bring the economy under control, insure a strong defense, guarantee their personal safety, restore respect for the law, afford the benefits of modern medicine, preserve the environment, secure for themselves a peaceful, healthy and dignified old age and protect themselves from the vast array of special

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interests that constitute so much of modern America.

Individualism in America is not dead. But it has been pushed from the public domain into the private—with emphasis on self-fulfillment, interesting work, self-education, sexuality, concern with health and nutrition, a more open marriage, a more relaxed attitude toward success and a taste of the full, rich life. These matters are still seen as being within the individual's control. The sphere of what the individual *cannot* do for himself has greatly expanded and the government's role is accepted as basic and decisive in this enlarged arena. What people are demanding, therefore, is not less government but better government.

Compassion is the final component of fitness. It is important to emphasize, not because it is the most important element, but because it is so easily overlooked. Americans continue to strongly support such ideals as equality of opportunity, a good education for all children, assistance for the elderly and the disadvantaged, help for those in need abroad. It is thought that more fairness in the tax structure, a greater assumption of personal responsibilities by individuals, more concern for the public good, and improved efficiency in government would not only permit an easier identification of those genuinely in need, but also greater resources with which to work.

How have the two candidates measured up to the criteria thus far? By recent public opinion measures, not very well. A tone of disappointment and lack of enthusiasm pervades the campaign. Some of the "fitness" issues discussed above have been raised by the candidates, but both sides suffer from a credibility problem: the public dismisses much of what is said as campaign rhetoric and empty overpromising. Throughout this campaign, we have found an unprecedented number of uncommitted or "soft" voters—people who may be leaning towards one candidate or the other, but who have not firmly made up their mind. Our opinion surveys show that more than half of the electorate (52 percent) can be classified as "soft" and uncommitted, almost four times as many voters who could be classified as such at a comparable point in 1972.

Behind this year's uncertainty lies conflict and indecision in the voters' mind. The voters simply have not yet decided whether Ford or Carter comes closer to meeting the job qualifications they have in mind. As the late sociologist Paul Lazarsfeld pointed out 30 years ago, conflict and indecision breed procrastination in making decisions. When people are uncertain, when they don't have a clear notion of which candidate appears more fit, they tend to postpone the final decision as long as possible.

In elections, there is the third option of not voting at all. Many voters may, in this way, opt out of the decision altogether if their conflict continues unresolved. Given the current labile state of the campaign, and barring some major breakthrough, the prospect is for an election very much like that of 1948, one in which a decisive number of voters did not make up their minds until the very end, or did not vote at all. (In 1948, only 51.1 percent of the electorate voted.)

For the next few weeks, voters will be firming up their decisions. Most likely, they will take as much time as they have available. They will continue to search hungrily for some element in the campaign—a clue in a speech or debate, a development on the national or international scene—that will convince them one way or the other. In doing so, they will be focusing mainly, though not entirely, on Jimmy Carter. For it is the confusion about Carter that lies at the heart of the voters' indecision. The electorate feels that it has a fairly clear sense of what a Ford presidency would be like. A Carter presidency, on the other hand, is still somewhat of a mystery. The voters would like to believe that he offers fresh thinking. But they're not yet sure; they haven't been persuaded. They haven't drawn a firm bead on Carter, and that is what the final phase of this campaign is all about.

It is important, particularly for the candidates, to realize who is making this decision, because when I say the voters, what I really mean is the Independents, the moderate center of the American electorate. The Democratic and Republican party faithful have pretty much made up their minds. The polls show that the most volatile and indecisive voters are the Independents—a group as large as the Republican party, and one that is neither markedly liberal nor conservative.

If Jimmy Carter can convince enough Independents that he is fit to be President, he will win the election. He has a lot of built-in advantages—an opponent who must defend eight difficult years of Republican incumbency, the voters' desire for a change, problems with the economy, the electorate's impulse to find a leader who can restore the moral authority of the presidency and coalesce the nation around a clearly perceived national purpose. But all of these advantages will go for naught if Carter fails to persuade the public that he is fit to govern. In the primaries, it was enough to ask for the voters' trust. But for many reasons this direct appeal to trust no longer works. In his words and actions, Carter must now present good evidence of realism, practicality, fairness, sound judgment, and above all, determination to promise only what he can deliver. If he doesn't succeed, the electorate will settle for Ford—less than enthusiastically, but nonetheless decisively. Ford is acceptable: he is the incumbent and he is a known quantity. In easier, more lighthearted times, the public might be willing to take more of a chance. But it is characteristic of the current somber mood of moral realism that the public should now press Carter hard to eschew the politician's easy promise or easy rhetoric in order to get down to bedrock reality. If Carter is to win he will have to persuade the Independents that he's more than a traditional Democrat willing to promise the moon, irrespective of costs.

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Arts and Lives

Stanley Kauffmann on theater

A Texas Trilogy

(Broadhurst)

Preston Jones, a Texan now 40 years old, has for a number of years been an actor at the Dallas Theater Center. During 1973-74 he wrote three full-length plays about a West Texas town. During the last two years, word of those plays has spread, as they were produced first in Dallas and then in other resident theaters around the country. Last spring the three plays were produced in repertory at the Kennedy Center in Washington; now those Kennedy productions have been brought to New York, and now the fact that they have disappointed many in New York has been ascribed to their advance publicity.

There's no reason at this too-late date to dwell on US publicity inflation. In the theater, as I've noted before, that inflation is often caused by critics pumping away in the hope, indirectly, of sustaining their jobs. But how could an American trilogy, after numerous prior productions, be done at the Kennedy and then be headed for New York without stirring up hoopla? To blame that hoopla for a letdown is a new high in disingenuousness.

Anyway, an effort of such scope deserves scrutiny. Here are (necessarily) brief descriptions of the three plays. All are set in Bradleyville, Texas, during the 20 years after 1953. The order in which one sees them is irrelevant to the author, but by coincidence I saw them in order of declining interest. *Lu Ann Hampton Laverty Oberlander* takes place in three acts that are 10 years apart. We see Lu Ann as a squirmy high-school girl meeting the boy she will marry; as a bar-haunting divorcée with a small daughter; as a weary widow with a teen-age daughter. *The Oldest Living Graduate* is about an aged rich rancher, confined to a wheelchair, who was a colonel in the First War and is the most ancient alumnus of a Galveston military academy. His 50-ish son wants to use a ceremony in honor of that last fact to promote a business deal, for which he needs some property of the old man's. The colonel holds on to it for sentimental reasons; then has a stroke at a lodge meeting, and gives it to his son. *The Last Meeting of the Knights of the White Magnolia* is about that same night, a small group of seedy white supremacists meeting in a fusty hall in the colonel's hotel to induct a new member and keep the lodge alive. It's only a series of rube vaudeville skits building up to the colonel's stroke that happened offstage in the previous play.

The productions don't give the plays enough help. Ben Edwards' settings look cheap and drab, as settings even of cheap, drab places. (Yes, producing these three plays was expensive, but I'm talking about results, not problems.) The cast is spotty. As the tripartite Lu Ann, Diane Ladd seems more concerned with sinking her teeth into three showy parts than in the woman herself. She gives us résumés of every performance we have seen of a bouncy teenager, a tight-dressed beautician, a straggly-haired housewife. She is helped principally by the fact that she is doing all three in one evening: if she were doing only one, the mechanics and vacancies would be clearer.

Fred Gwynne, the old colonel, has some force and color but also some self-indulgence. Certainly the *character* is a ham. (For myself, I'd like to see all old people in wheelchairs banned from stage and film: they're always either lovable or hateful bores.) But Gwynne embroiders the part with elaborate double gesture and mugging. Patricia Roe works sharply as his tart daughter-in-law, Lee Richardson works with his usual honesty as her husband. James Staley and Baxter Harris are authentic as swain and second husband of Lu Ann. The rest—of comment on the acting—is silence.

Alan Schneider directed the plays and, at its best, his work is unobtrusive. But there are many moments that obtrude. In *Graduate*, for instance, Character A sits on a sofa center while B stands at the end of it; A gets up and walks behind the sofa while B comes around and sits on it—again and again. In *Knights*, for another instance, Henderson Forsythe has a long silent minute wandering around the stage at the end, as he closes the meeting-room, which in tempo and detail is agonizingly trite.

A "regional" playwright like Jones can be relied on for "regional" dialogue. People talk about "Worlds War One," the phrase "by God" is inserted everywhere ("this by God town"), the colonel's word for "stupid" is "bumble-dicking," high-school Lu Ann calls nice things "neat-o," and so on. Moreover, Jones conveys that these people, as in other well-knit communities, love conversation and deal with their lives in language.

But in Jones' character portrayals something spurious creeps in. The author quite clearly knows these people, but he has allowed his experience and observation to be crammed into clichés of stage and film. Lu Ann is a conglomerate out of William Inge and others; Kincaid is in the line of latter-day Lionel Barrymore nasties; the Knights are a troupe of rube comics out of old local-yokel plays and films. (See *Way Down East*.) Of course these clichés originally had some basis in life: all fictional stereotypes have. But without sufficient power of revitalization in their use, all we're conscious of is that they've been used before. The past weight of past plays and films has crushed Jones' honest intent into patent theatrical manufacture. It's something that has happened before to writers of serious purpose and insufficient talent.

That insufficiency is further apparent in his structures. These are linear realistic plays: if Jones had written three such plays *well*, it would have been wonderfully refreshing in an age

Films Worth Seeing

The Clockmaker. From Simenon. Deeply textured, if politically glib, French drama about the father of a murderer and the detective in charge of the case.

Cousin, Cousine. French fantasy posing as realistic comedy about two 30-ish people having an affair. Highly enjoyable, utterly incredible.

The Memory of Justice. Another very long, very intelligent film essay by the author of *The Sorrow and the Pity*. This one, based on the Nuremberg trials, is not as completely realized as *Sorrow*—still a rare treat for the eye and mind.

Silent Movie. When you can't hear Mel Brooks, he has some charm. His best film, fairly filled with fun.

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that thinks innovation equals value. But his idea of exposition is to have A ask B some leading questions so that we can get information or to have B tell A things that A already knows for the same purpose. And all three of his plays are so thin that he has to pad blatantly (the checker game and Josh Mostel's scene in Act II of *Lu Ann*, the scene with the handyman in Act I of *Graduate*). Structurally worse than these things is the fact that Jones feels the need for late ironic disclosure in two of the plays. Near the end of *Graduate* we learn that the son has all along owned the property he's been begging his father for, legally awarded him because the old man is mentally incompetent. We're supposed to believe, and can't, that the son has gone through all this begging just because he wants his father to *give* him something; and a drama of dynastic contest is subverted to a weak Oedipal ploy. At the rueful end of *Knights* a leading Knight says he has known all along that the lodge is finished; so the whole evening, in which these buffoons have been trying to get a young man to join them and keep them going, becomes retrospectively even more tedious than it has been.

The themes of the three plays are discernible but affectively dull. In *Lu Ann*, the best of the three, the heroine is at the end in more or less the position her mother was in at the start, and what has been outlined for us is the frustration of petty ambitions and banal desires. A possibly important subject, if intensely treated; at Jones' level it produces only glib pathos. In *Graduate* we get a murky image of the past's false grandeur being ground under the money millstones of the present, a kind of parallel movement to *Knights*, in which racism—a component of that grandeur—is shown to be fading away.

The dim effect of these themes, the tinniness of character portrayal and structure are rooted in fundamental indecision: how does Jones feel toward his characters? Why has he written about them? Is he being satiric? Is he being sympathetic? Is his purpose, in a sense, historical? Is he deliberately *all* these things? It's impossible to say; and this basic obscurity of intent is what makes his work lurch from point to point, occasionally somewhat moving in a facile way, until it ends in general muddle.

The entire enterprise is at last only a managerial phenomenon: the fact that three new plays by one author were presented in repertory on Broadway. I confess a special disappointment. I had hoped that the Jones trilogy would be a proof of national theatrical vitality, of theatrical decentralization at a high level of quality. But these plays have the opposite effect: they underscore the word "provincial."

Film Festival Report

That's Entertainment, Part MCXVII

The absolute last word in up-to-date nostalgia, this 12-and-one-half-hour extravaganza was spliced together from rare film clips and electronically reprocessed for Saunarama, the theatrical sensation that wraps the viewer in live steam and then douses him with ice-cold water from 50 sprinkler heads cunningly concealed in a pressed-tin ceiling.

Finding usable film clips from the "good old days" was no easy task for the young producers, Mark Malibu and Jo DeAngelis, who have been working together ever since he dipped her pigtails in a tray of hypo at the Jean Hersholt Elementary School in Palo Verde 10 years ago. "Most of the really commercial stuff was grabbed off early in the game by those vultures at MGM, Warners and Paramount," says Mark, "so we really had to dig!" Some of their finest footage was unearthed abroad. For example, out of the Zurich vaults of Europischer-Flicker-Machers, SA, comes a little-known gem of cinematic art, the Lumière brothers' one-reel condensation of Balzac's *Comédie Humaine* (1894). Here also, captured on sepia-toned celluloid in a 1910 newsreel, is the legendary *alto saxo* of the Milan Civic Opera, Maria Dolce, hitting her never-to-be-repeated high C above high B as a microphone boom falls on

NEWSWORTHY

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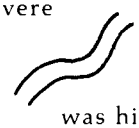
her toe. And what moment in the history of horror films can be compared with the moment when the great Horst Eier grimaces *with the back of his neck* in *Der Untermensch von Weimar*, the 1926 classic that triggered a near-fatal run on the Deutsche mark.

Despite all their filmographic globe-trotting, the producers have not ignored the still untapped riches closer to home. "Just because rhe rights to *Gone With the Wind* and *Singin' in the Rain* were not available doesn't mean we had to settle for second-best," Jo insists. "A lot of people aren't aware of the terrific footage that a WPA camera-crew shot for the Allagash Basin Veterinary Dentistry Service in the late '30s." She and Mark are especially pleased to have borrowed, with their own library card, a virgin print of Silas Cartwright's *Bovine Toothache*, which may represent the first use of a handheld camera in an upper molar extraction.

Finally, for those film buffs who can't get enough of the silver screen's Golden Era, there is a montage snipped from what might be called "Hollywood's home movies," including a rare behind-the-scenes glimpse of seven-time Oscar winner Barry Bartholomew at work in his Rancho Mirage studio. The late Mr. Bartholomew first made his mark with the little curlicues that brighten up the corners of the title cards in many early silent movies. Although he was probably best known for his elegant

and,

his professional colleagues felt that his more severe



was his finest achievement. In his later years—from 1927 to 1975—he was semi-retired, but he kept his hand in by forging the names of local fire commissioners to the fly-specked notices that say: "Occupancy by more than 212 persons in this theater is prohibited by law." He won his last Oscar in 1974—as a sentimental favorite in the category "Neatest Penmanship by a Naturalized American Citizen"—for his rendition of "Fred R. Lafferty, Jr." of the West Covina Hose Company No. 3.

Gerald Jonas

Gerald Jonas writes regularly for *The New Yorker*.

A Wall That Lets You In

Christo and the Running Fence

Christo causes events. He orchestrates large groups of people into processes that may and do take years. But, quite unlike gods, the fates, and other mythic beings, he does not call the tune, although he sets the theme.

I have just finished the actual physical day, some 14 hours, of seeing the realization of Christo's "Running Fence," an enterprise which has literally occupied 24-and-one-half-miles in Sonoma and Marin Counties, some 40 miles north of San Francisco, and for the past four years the efforts of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of people.

These human collaborators, willing and unwilling, are part of what Christo sees as his art, and the whole effort fits neatly into the art world's insatiable and unassuaged appetite to categorize and define. Process art and conceptual art are relatively new vogue labels, calling out for attention although all art did not involve both concept and process. Christo with unabated enjoyment however knows how to appeal to the media at large. At the moment, millions of people must be aware, dimly or sharply, that some crazy artist in California (where else, natch?) has constructed a 24-mile fence and had it called art.

In London, just before I left to travel the 6000 miles necessary to actually see the crazy artist and the crazy fence, I noted that the *Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper which delights in being unashamedly philistine, was reporting Christo's fence as news, and in its normal manner calling its readers' attention to the peculiar aberrations of contemporary art (in England, these aberrations are often overtly paid for with public money, not covertly as in America, where tax exemptions for supporting the arts make such subsidy seem a private affair). I managed, too, to catch a glimpse of "Running Fence" on the television news, in prime time, as Christo would delightedly assert.

Most of Christo's support, intellectually and financially, comes from Europe, where he himself first started as a young artist fresh in the West, from Bulgaria via Czechoslovakia. Wending his way still further Westwards via his years in Paris, he wrapped and barricaded as he went. A street was temporarily bounded by a construct of oil drums in Paris; at Documenta, the biggest and most self conscious exploration of the avant-garde in the world, Christo with implacable calm wrapped and tied up a column of air hundreds of feet high. Museum and gallery shows chronicled his desire, it seemed, to wrap the world up. He wrapped chairs, buildings, and any object that took his fancy. Pausing, so to speak, to marry the charming, energetic Jeanne-Claude, the daughter of a French general, Christo found a true complement. Since then, Christo has wrapped museum buildings in America; wrapped in woven materials a mile of coastline a few miles from Sydney; and in 1972 strung an orange "Valley Curtain" from mountain to mountain across a highway at Rifle Gap, Colorado. He has also settled in New York, and become an American citizen.

Christo and Jeanne-Claude have between them invented a sure-fire method of financing Christo's projects. For "Running Fence," the method followed the successful model set up for "Valley Curtain." A corporation was formed—the Running Fence Corporation—which has as its President Jeanne-Claude, and as its assets all previously unsold works by Christo from 1958 on: wrapped objects, drawings, collages and prints. Christo is under obligation to no gallery; his wife is his dealer, and she proceeded to deal with the corporation's assets. Twenty-thousand-dollar blocks were sold to collectors, museums, galleries and dealers at varying advantageous terms. By permutations of this solidly competent method (I don't know why Jeanne-Claude is not a guest lecturer at the Harvard Business School, let alone the National Endowment) a sum—partially in loans—in excess of two million dollars has been raised.

And spent. Spent on the employment of hundreds of people, from the factory in West Virginia which wove the 165,000 yards of special white nylon (the fabric for Running Fence) to A and H Contractors of Colorado who had previously worked on Valley Curtain, and whose chief, Ted Dougherty, has headed the construction aspects of Running Fence.

Lawyers, environmental consultants and other professional experts have helped (for their fees) in such diverse

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activities as seeing the project proposals through 17 court hearings (with more to come), three sessions in superior courts in California, and preparing a 450-page Environmental Impact Report. Hundreds of students at $2.50 an hour helped in the actual unfurling of the fence.

Through it all, Christo has had the most important emotional and intellectual need of the artist fulfilled. What he wants to do, and what he has done, has been paid attention to and often, though not always, with quite serious attention. He has had to convince people outside the art world of the worth of his ideas. His ideas and practical proposals have been debated in one form or another by the community in which he wishes to work—and here there is a fundamental difference between Christo's work and the work of many artists today which is imposed or presented by a small group of art "experts." The possibility of his art being actually realized has been finally affirmed by a democratic process. Everybody his art might affect has been consulted; indeed the very materials of which Running Fence has been composed will, when the process of dismantling is finished at the end of October, be given to the people through whose land Running Fence has passed. The local bars, restaurants and motels have had extra business, too.

He and his art have thus achieved fame or notoriety (depending on what side of the Fence you are on—in fact there has even been a Committee to Stop the Fence, led by local artists). But in other terms, he has deliberately forsworn some of the conventional measurements of artistic success. While books, exhibitions of the drawings, collages and prints, a film (made by the Maysles Brothers who also covered Valley Curtain) are among the expectations of successful artists, Running Fence itself, as Wrapped Coast and Valley Curtain before it, cannot by its very nature be enshrined in a museum. Only the ideas, the documents, and the visual notes for the project will remain.

This is exactly as Christo wants it. The direct experience of his art remains only in the memory, does not, as he says, survive beyond its own prime time. Thus it can never be seen out of the setting the artist chose. Meanwhile, everybody who has participated, from journalists to judges, has been in some way part of Christo's social culture.

And the point? Christo says fundamentally just the enjoyment of it all. This amplification of our own responses, and it is impossible to see or think of Running Fence without considering the setting which it augmented—those dusty brown fields and small towns of Sonoma and Marin Counties, the cows, the sheep, the horses, the houses, the roads, the sea, the sky, the wind, the lie of the land, the fences, the gates, the cars, the trucks, the silvery-green groves of eucalyptus, the people—this amplification is of course a prime purpose of art, a purpose too often abandoned and forgotten in the sheer jargon with which we surround its direct experience, and protect ourselves from feeling.

Christo lives simply. His ambitious projects by their nature are not for sale; he wishes them to be free, accessible to all who wish to come and look. He has been offered vast tracts of land on private property—which would mean no hassles with public authorities—on which to work, but declined with thanks. It is the public process and debate that he wants. Like all art the result is useable, but not useful; functional, it nevertheless does not relate directly to the practical needs of sustaining life.

The physicality of the Running Fence was a revelation. It shimmered with reflected light, moved by the wind as it curved and curled its way from the Freeway (Highway 101) to—and in to—the Pacific. This line of meandering opalescent white followed no arbitrary path. Christo wished to join together the elements of what he has seen as the segments of California society.

He had searched the state for the right site—and the state had been chosen for many of the same reasons enunciated in "California, Here I Come"—its myth as the Golden State, the state of opportunity, the frontier, the state where all is possible, the state that has received the largest flood of internal immigration in the history of America. And Christo chose the form of a fence because of California's linear pattern of building—settlements that spread out rather than up, extend horizontally rather than vertically.

Christo's right site combined poverty and affluence, the somewhat difficult lives of the ranchers and the working class inhabitants of the small towns, the prosperity of some of the chicken farmers and the affluent San Francisco commuters, the big freeway, the small secondary county roads. The white color of the material was chosen for its reflective qualities, and the fact that it

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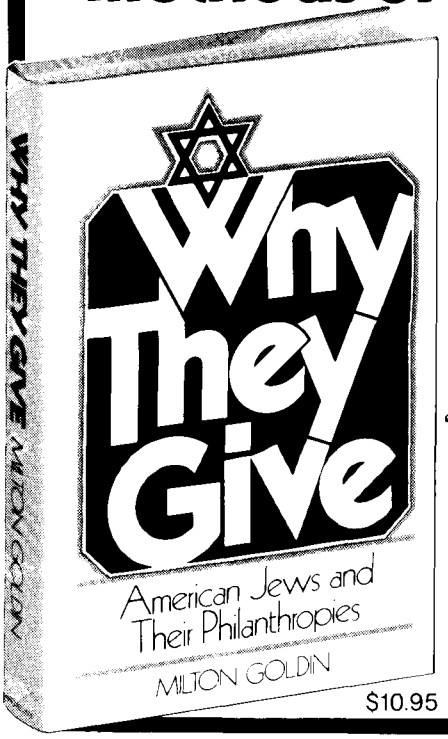

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echoes the most usual beached colorings of the local buildings; its height, 18 feet, because that paralleled the average height of the small houses of the inhabitants of Marin and Sonoma Counties.

What I nevertheless find quite staggering are the reactions of the media to Running Fence. The sculpture itself is simply a beautiful and amazing thing, a phenomenon that in itself looks quite wonderful, and even more, insinuates itself in such a way into the landscape that while it intervenes it does not interfere. Running Fence in some uncanny way is not only a piece of sculpture (or a piece of 'land art,' to use another fashionable label) but itself sculpts the land, and is in turn sculpted by the wind and light. It intensifies the characteristics, physical and emotional, of the way in which we apprehend the meeting points of man and his landscape. And it has cost nobody, except Christo, anything.

Yet the media cannot resist the possibilities inherent in caricaturing Christo's Bulgarian accent (I wonder how we would sound speaking Bulgarian); and more, cannot resist the implication that in some way we are being taken, being conned, because somebody has managed to make a public work of art in a public manner without using public money. Others, with a hint of moral righteousness, have implied that Running Fence is a waste of scarce resources. A waste? We should be grateful that we are in a society rich enough for Christo to create Running Fence with no coercion. He hasn't sold us anything. All he has done is provide employment in a society where millions are drawing unemployment benefits. It is in a way a private New Deal. The company which made the cloth was threatened with liquidation at the time Christo's order came along—why? Because the US military didn't need many more parachutes at the end of the Vietnam war.

Christo's project is totally pacific. He has added, not taken away; he has amplified, not diminished. Why we should feel threatened is a phenomenon in itself. Threats make news. The sight of Christo's great Running Fence, the sheer beauty and surprise of it, is not enough. But it should be—and for me, it was.

Marina Vaizey

Marina Vaizey is the art critic of the *Sunday Times*, London, and a member of the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Books Considered

Golfing for Cats by Alan Coren

(St. Martin's; $7.95)

Not since Oxford gave Sam Clemens a degree and Beerbohm loosed Zuleika on the Cherwell have the dreaming spires spawned such anarchy as *Golfing for Cats;* ruminant critics already discern a disconcerting pattern. With Monty Python running Whitehall, it was probably inevitable that Alan Coren would become Rector of St. Andrew's; but does this mean Woody Allen will shortly rule the Yard, or Groucho Marx succeed Henry Kissinger? What with Mel Brooks and Mary Hartman, are we even now in a High Cultural shift overlooked by McLuhan? Granted a Goon Show or an S.J. Perelman in every civilization's wake, where does a book called *Golfing for Cats*, emblazoned with a *non sequitur* swastika and selling faster than the publisher can print it, come from? And what does it mean?

In the flaccid post-Suez twilight of 1960, three shadows roamed the mists of Oxford like a dream, as alien as Alaric at the Vatican: a westerner, a southerner and a London Jew. Their mates were gone—Kingsley Amis washed out of the B. Litt.; and the three comrades slumped one by one into intellectual oblivion. The first to surface emerged a country-and-western superstar, songwriter, sometime gunslinger *amoroso* and moveable feast. He ended up in *Playboy*, muscling his way through a nude Mishima dumbshow with Sarah Miles. The second returned as Deputy Editor of *Punch*, Peter Ustinov's successor at St. Andrew's, and *Times*-certified "comic genius." He made his appearance in *Playboy* with Mick Jagger, sort of, like a starstruck ad-man in Pandemonium. The third friend did not return at all and has never been in *Playboy*; but he makes a brief appearance as Robert E. Dunlap in *Golfing for Cats* and, like Gollum in the heart of the mountain, he keeps tabs on what happens to the gold rings of acclaim. He knows better than most why it is time Coren got one.

Coren studied language and literature at Berkeley and Yale as well as Oxford. He is familiar with the notion that every age has its characteristic mode of thought, its rhetorical tendencies and conventions of discourse. Like his precursor Perelman, he's fascinated by the abuse of words—the horrors or banalities they mask with equal facility, the hypocrisy or inanity of their perpetrators, the numbness or incredulity of their audience. In the calculated overload of forced verbiage—Watergate, Arms Race, Elizabeth Ray, Tidal Basin Bombshell—the language of Samuel Johnson becomes a *Night at the Opera* contract and its characteristic maneuver the *reductio ad absurdum*. Coren has already published a diplomatic manual, *The Collected Bulletins of President Idi Amin*. In *Golfing for Cats* he provides the non-specialist with a series of meditative exercises on coping with absurdity, loans for the *au courant*. In Kampala they doubtless already know that in times like ours prophecy is a matter of projecting, *reductio ad absurdum*, the most preposterous result of any situation. The rest of us can learn from Coren, not only the cathartic relief of reaching the end of the speculative line intact, but the grace of an urbane exuberance en route. To be sure, it is the urbanity of Isaac Newton portrayed by Marty Feldman; but a saving soupçon on the waggish don survives, the bemusement of a scuttled Dodgson who has happened upon bodies in the Nile. It's the sort of survival equipment with which one can once again attack the morning newspaper:

> *High meat prices have made rustling highly lucrative, and it is increasing, says the National Farmers' Union. Livestock worth £30,000 was stolen last year. The NFU said another worrying development was that groups of townsmen were going out with .22 rifles to "kill themselves a sheep."*
>
> *Scotland Yard has evidence that teams of pickpockets working for the Mafia entered Britain last month. They are far more skilled than British pickpockets. Following the recent invasion by expert foreign shoplifters, this trend cannot but be disturbing.*
>
> *The frantic attempt earlier this year to disguise Britain's Stansted Airport as Orly in order to confuse a hijacker was a panic operation. With time to plan ahead things will be very different in future.*

But this is mere reality, the sordid platform from which Coren launches his problematical *salto mortale*. A prime minister exhorts Britons to recapture the spirit of Dunkirk; so Coren, like a

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journalistic Ubu Roi, reverses the equation: what if today's island of malcontent grocers had been on the beaches in 1940?

Up to his waist in the filthy sea, oil lapping his sodden webbing, bomb-blasted flotsam bobbing about him, he sucked his teeth and shook his head.
"I'm not bleeding going in that," he said,
"I'm not bleeding going home in no rowing boat."
"Right," said his mate.
"Eighteen blokes in it already," he said.
"Conditions like that, they're not fit for a pig."

or, since Lord Blake fears a television-induced decline in literacy, there is the undergraduate, tube-soaked into imbecility, who patiently outlines a possible adaptation of *Hamlet:*

"—mind you, there's nothing to stop the victim coming back from the dead, if you do it right. They find him in this orchard with an earful of wossname, and his heart's stopped and everything, but there's still this faint pulse in his brain, so they scoop it out and weld it to a lot of bionic arms and legs they've got, and next thing you know he's come back as the Six Million Dollar Dane, running through the castle at sixty miles an hour, and squashing Claude's head like a pingpong ball!"
"Claudius," murmured the Senior Tutor.
"And him," said Corbett. "'Course, there wouldn't be much room in it for young Hamlet. You'd have to cut his part out."

Or, if an aging Christopher Robin can display the Milne skeletons, what about Winnie-the-Pooh, a dyspeptic alcoholic bumped down the stairs once too often, who never got to sing *Body and Soul* though, as he ruefully notes, he made his appearance the same year as Jay Gatsby. Or, if Orwell predicts 1984, Coren assures us it can never happen there: British ineptitude will prevent it. Or—shades of Archie Bunker at Khartoum Villas, Cricklewood—when the issue of racism arises at a Labour party conference, a delegate writes

May I here and now, at this convenient juncture, say that I personally as a long-standing member of the International Socialist brotherhood have nothing against our dusky brethren who are doing such wonderful things in Africa, where they belong, and I stand four-square behind the Government on the vile, yes, vile *iniquities of the Simonstown Agreement.*

But—and am I wrong to assume that I may not be entirely alone in my opinion?—does this automatically mean these people have got the right to force their way into Working Men's Clubs, borrowing our darts and all that entails?

Coren's language has the ornateness of Victorian furniture tossed with jaunty desperation onto the ramparts at Lucknow. Austerity may nail him to the wall, but the trueborn Englishman hurts only when he laughs:

The children stood in the empty bath for a while, beating one another to a healthy glow with the dry loofahs while I played Fingal's Cave *on a hand-wound gramophone and my wife did a realistic imitation of soap, and when they were tucked up (we find a cat in a sock is a wonderful substitute for a hot water-bottle, if marginally noisier), we crept downstairs for that part of the evening we call our own.*

And there are off-hand flourishes: "the cat sat on the bonnet, as in the more advanced spelling books. . ."; the blonde barmaid piled her ravishing bust loosely

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upon the bar . . ." One reviewer calls this "Coren . . . playing fiendish arabesques on his Neronic fiddle." And Coren's comedy does seem to erupt in a neon-lit no-man's land on the neither lip of disaster—never on a golden afternoon along the river, always at that unsettling moment when the White Queen yanks Alice's hair and screams, "Take care of yourself! Something's going to happen!" But his final blow is more in the manner of Petronius Arbiter in his farewell bath, musing on a Neronic string of dementias and disasters:

Never mind. We shall sit here in the twilight, you and I, examining the small print of the social contract, while the drunken believers jet to and fro ten miles above us, our doors nailed fast against our black brothers (those, that is, who have not dropped dead from hunger beside our underpriced meat), as football managers come and go outside and national leaders rise, fall, stay, resign, and we are trundled from one cemetery to another, and we shall block our ears from the noise of shooting by watching ever more successful compendia of nostalgic rubbish, some of it good (That's Shakespeare!) *some of it bad* (That's Proust!), *and we shall try to ignore the strontium seping into plumbing, choosing instead to doze a little as we sit waking only to scratch ourselves reflectively with our giant rubber hands.*

That's J. Alfred Prufrock doing a turn on the set of *Cabaret*. Which is why Robert E. Dunlap, even in the murk of postliterate obscurity, comprehends the swastika on the cover. As the French say, "we must laugh before we are happy, lest we should die without having laughed."

Benjamin Dunlap

Benjamin Dunlap, professor of English at the University of South Carolina, began his studies of Alan Coren as a Rhodes Scholar.

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The Scene
By Calvin Tomkins

(Viking; $12.50)

At the outset of his latest collection of *New Yorker* essays, Calvin Tomkins issues a disclaimer. He reminds the reader that he is a reporter and not a critic, an observer though not an analyst of *The Scene*. These opening remarks strike a strained, apologetic note out of tune both with the entertaining, straightforward essays that follow and with the period in which Tomkins is writing. Newspapers, magazines and books in the last two decades have abounded with art reporting, so why should Tomkins apologize?

The answer lies in the subject matter of *The Scene*. Art is a serious business, and to whose who view art as transcendent, Calvin Tomkins is little more than the Rona Barrett of the art world.

Despite their proliferation during the '60s and early '70s, art reporters were looked upon with disdain. The formalist critics and artists who then held sway determined that the gossipy ephemera that surrounded the production of art—prices, parties, art world politics —was too irrelevant to be documented. Social histories of art were disregarded and the viewer stared hard at each painting and sculpture, trying desperately to divorce the work from its political, economic and social milieu. Most particularly, as in new criticism in literature, any consideration of the artist's life was to be avoided. Industrially manufactured sculpture and field painting were a constant reminder that just as the artist denied the presence of his hand in the piece, so the viewer should remove the image of the artist from his mind. As Frank Stella so often reminded his audience: ". . . only what can be seen is there."

In this rarefied esthetic climate there were few meaningful functions that a mere journalist could serve. All that was truly suitable for recording was the name of the artist, the size and medium of the piece, and where and when the exhibition was being held. It was apparent, then, that Calvin Tomkins had committed an act of sacrilege when *The Bride and The Bachelors* first appeared in 1965. Dealing with five figures from the avant-garde—Duchamp, Tinguely, Cage, Rauschenberg and Cunningham—this first volume of collected essays was, and is, a treasure trove of good gossip. The artists spoke freely to Tomkins about their lives and the circumstances surrounding the creation of their art, and Tomkins, without grappling with the deeper significance of these things, presented them to the public in a highly entertaining fashion. Such ingenuousness could not go without reprimand. Hilton Kramer, writing in *The New York Review of Books*, took Tomkins to task for a "tendency to mythicize rather than to criticize."

Fortunately, Tomkins remains undaunted and he extends the mythology in his latest book, a volume that can be read as a companion piece to *The Bride and The Bachelors*. If in the first book Tomkins presented the roots of radical, alternative art, its evolution in more recent times is documented in *The Scene*. Biography is the basic format of the pieces, and once again the artists' background is a springboard to a presentation of a broader cultural situation. The chapter on Nam June Paik, for example, deals with the origins and development of video art. Jonas Mekas' life serves as a super-structure for a history of underground film. The acquisition policies of the Metropolitan Museum of Art are reviewed in a chapter on Henry Geldzahler, the museum's curator of contemporary art. A concise and wonderfully lucid account of the development of lithography accompanies a biographical sketch of Tatyana Grosman, the founder of Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE). Each subject in turn—Andy Warhol, Robert Wilson, four earthworkers, the artists and engineers of EAT (Experi-

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ments in Art and Technology)—emerges as an individual and as a representative of one segment of the prevailing cultural sensibility.

The individuals under discussion in *The Scene* occupy, in most instances, the far shore of the avant-garde, for they create what Tomkins designates as "post-modern" art. This art is, by definition, difficult to comprehend, yet Tomkins explains his complex material admirally. He even makes the material enjoyable: the restraint and decorum of his prose style is often a delightful counterpoint to his content:

> *In the "Etude for Pianoforte" . . . [Nam June] Paik played some Chopin on the piano, broke off, weeping, and got up and threw himself upon the innards of another, eviscerated piano that lay scattered about the floor, then picked up a wickedly long pair of scissors and leaped down to where Cage, the pianist David Tudor, and Karlheinz Stockhausen were sitting, in the front row. He removed Cage's suit jacket and started to slash away at his shirt with the scissors. Later he explained that he had intended to cut off the shirttail but when he saw that Cage was not wearing an undershirt he took pity on him and decided instead to cut off his necktie at the knot. After doing so, he poured a bottle of shampoo over Cage's head and also over Tudor's (As Stockhausen edged nervously away, Paik shouted "Not for you!") When the bottle was empty and both Cage and Tudor were fully lathered, Paik forced his way through the crowded room to the door and ran out. Everyone sat as though stunned, Cage recalls, for several minutes. Finally, the telephone rang: it was Paik, calling to say that the concert was over.*

By reporting rather than commenting on post-modern art, Tomkins is free to cover territory that is foreign to criticism. Unencumbered by aspirations to higher significance, he deals with the practical problems of making art today.

One such mundane problem runs like a leitmotif through the essays. That problem is money, a subject that is ordinarily taboo in any critical discussion of art. The reasons behind this structure are real and valid, for it is frighteningly simple to turn a critic's opinion into a marketable commodity. With post-modern art, however, questions of financial concern take on a new significance. How does an artist raise money to produce art that cannot be bought, sold, and, in some instances, that cannot be seen? Where did Christo obtain the $850,000 necessary to hang a curtain across a valley in Rifle, Colorado? How did EAT get Pepsi to finance their technological extravaganza at the Osaka Expo? The image of the radical artist that emerges from Tomkins' reportage is very different from the romantic stereotype of the bohemian at odds with the Establishment. As Tomkins' account makes clear, today's artist often knows as much about zoning regulations, obscenity laws, environmental impact statements and public and private endowments as he does about his art form. Without this knowledge, the realization of his art might well be impossible. This is the harsh irony that emerges from Tomkins' essays: the artist that rejected the creation of discreet, precious objects with the hope of subverting the present economic system has instead produced an expression of that system. The artist no longer sells his painting and returns to the studio. Post-modern art is made in the courts and in corporate boardrooms, and its dependence on these official sanctions has circumscribed its radical intentions.

It is easy to suspect that a book as entertaining as *The Scene* is essentially frivolous. But there is much to be learned from studying the context in which today's art is made. Art journalism is a significant, even a crucial adjunct to art history and criticism.

Mary Ann Tighe

Mary Ann Tighe is writer and producer of the "Art America" television series.

Theory of Criticism by Murray Krieger

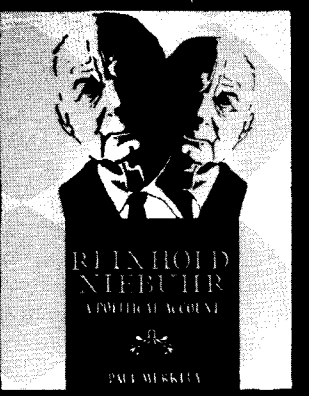
(Johns Hopkins Univ. Press; $12.95)

"Literary theory is a vain discipline. I mean vain in both senses: it is prideful, even preening in its glittering systematic displays, and it is—ultimately—fruitless." Murray Krieger begins his latest work of literary theory with these bold words. But they are followed 10 lines later by the inevitable "Nevertheless," which introduces 240 pages of literary theorizing. In some ways it is regrettable that this original insight is not pursued more thoroughly, for the vanity of current literary study is indeed a major problem, not only for academic critics and their students but for the whole culture, to the extent that literature and the formal study of literature ought to be contributing to the health of the culture.

The discipline of criticism is in a state of crisis at present—brought on by its own sophisticated self-doubts and tortured re-refinements of positions as well as by the residue of reflections left over from the more overtly political late '60s. Thus there are times when the kind of theoretical refinement exhibited in this book seems all too like scholastic debates about the behavior of angels. Though there is much rigor and learning here, there is also much taken on faith that might better have been questioned. But if we can set aside our doubts about the vanity of the whole enterprise, Krieger has some worthwhile things to offer us. One of them, and not the least, is simply the fruit of his own experience in the critical wars. He is philosophically circumspect. Like an experienced chess master, he knows what positions every line of attack and defense ought to yield in the end game—and all he wants is to be one pawn ahead. But he hopes to queen that pawn eventually.

The particular pawn he hopes to

"Mr. Carter gave frequent hints about the intellectual and religious origins of his political philosophy. The name that cropped up most often was that of the late Reinhold Niebuhr."
—New York Times, April 12, 1976



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enthrone is called "ordinary language" until it is elevated to the status of "poetry" by an act of "imagination." Since *The New Apologists for Poetry*, which he wrote 20 years ago, Krieger has been trying to provide a consistent theoretical justification for the interpretive practices of the New Critics, by linking the formalistic New Criticism to an Existentialist view of the human condition. In the present book we have a kind of summary statement of this theoretical position, which is based upon Kant and Coleridge, with corroborative borrowings from critics as varied as Aristotle, Longinus, Burckhardt and Gombrich. Crudely summarized, the theory argues that poetry (including fiction and drama) offers a unique kind of experience, achieved through a special use of language by the poet, and that this unique experience is valuable because it regenerates language, thus offering readers a vision of reality rescued from the chaos of experience and the deadness of stereotype.

Several things may be said about this. First of all, it is anything but new. It is the traditional modernist position of existential humanism, blended with Kantian epistemology. Krieger is well aware of this. He hopes simply to make the case more clearly and powerfully than it has been made before. And he also wishes to defend this position against various "anti-humanistic" alternatives, including Saussurian structuralism and Derridean deconstructivism. Thus the book consists of some esthetic premises, some derivation of principles from Plato, Aristotle, Sidney, Johnson, Kant, Coleridge, Arnold, Eliot, Richards, Ransom, Vivas, Burckhardt, Gombrich, Colie and Krieger himself, followed by criticisms of the alternative positions. All this is done with patience, learning, fairness and an exemplary explicitness about assumptions and alternatives.

Nevertheless (for I, too, must use that word), from my perspective this material is too familiar, its truths too obvious, and its assumptions too questionable for it to help the discipline of criticism in its present crisis. In saying this, I should add, I see myself as Krieger's anatgonist, not his judge. It is not for me to say that my perspective is superior to his. But it is certainly different. The difference begins with a major assumption. Krieger assumes that the world is a disorderly place, and that man, a clever alien, orders it with his arts. From this it follows that literary art has a privileged position in saving man from the chaos of life and the alienation of his own position. Since the death of God, all we have left is Art—so runs the argument.

But suppose that this disorder and this alienation are themselves fictions, invented to aggrandize both humanity and the arts, to give extra importance to the human race, supposedly alienated from all the rest of creation, and to human art, which will rescue humanity from the chaos of material existence and the vulgarity of ordinary language. Suppose that, on the contrary, the world is already both orderly and beautiful except where man has made it ugly and chaotic. It is not too difficult to see in natural phenomena the same "purposeless purposiveness" that Kant found in esthetic objects. But Krieger claims the perfection of "organic form" for human artifacts while positing almost human flaws in the works of nature: "the natural object is likely to possess accidental imperfections . . . which the product of human art can avoid." We need not look too hard for holes in a critical vocabulary which makes its highest term of praise "organic" while insisting on the imperfection of natural things.

Krieger's theory accepts the old dualisms of man/nature and subject/object too easily. Above all, it leaves out the middle term in the man/nature system: culture. While attacking certain aspects of structuralism, Krieger ignores what structuralism in the human sciences is founded upon: a notion of culture as a matrix of semiotic systems, of which the poetic is just one. We will never achieve a viable poetics if we begin by privileging poetry as a transcendental medium. Love it we may, but worship it we must not. Works of literature—our body of recreational texts—do much for us and we are right to cherish them. But we should keep our praise this side of idolatry. Literary theory need not be that vain.

Finally, it should be noted that Krieger is a good New Critic and an able theoretician. His few illustrative discussions of poetic language are indeed exemplary; his summaries of critical positions are sensitive and accurate. His brief discussion of Jacques Derrida, for instance, conveys much in little about that subtle and difficult philosopher, even while debating with him. And Krieger's humanist position is itself admirable and in some ways comforting, even comfortable, because familiar. It is nice to see old verities reaffirmed. But the old verities have lost some of their veritability. We need new truths, that are not self-evident. It will not be easy either to find or to accept them.

Robert Scholes

Robert Scholes is professor of English at Brown, and author of *Structuralism in Literature* (Yale University Press).

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Another Republic
edited by Charles Simic and Mark Strand

(Ecco Press: $12.95)

It is now 66 years since Ezra Pound first began bringing the Provençals over into English (*The Spirit of Romance*) and 68 years since the author of "Prufrock" discovered Laforgue and ultimately Corbière through Arthur Symons' *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. From those first European sympathies Pound and Eliot (with Joyce and Wyndham Lewis) went on to fashion an international literary modernism, opening doors which would never again be closed and, in the process, completely reshaping the traditions of English and American poetry. Simultaneously, William Carlos Williams and Marianne Moore, committed to another kind of esthetic, were scrupulously blocking speech patterns, grocery lists and business documents into a new measure, trying to create an American poetry "that even cats and dogs could read." Despite the formalist resurgence of the '50s, it was basically this homemade esthetic tradition (the word is Hugh Kenner's) which was inherited and modified by the next generation of American poets, and some of its literary monuments are Jarrell's *The Lost World*, Roethke's "North American Sequence," Berryman's "Homage to Mistress Brad-

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street," Olson's *Maximus Poems*, and Lowell's *Life Studies*. The first post-modernists in Europe however, were groomed not only on Pound, Eliot and Joyce, but also on the spiritualism of Rilke, Proust, the generation of '37 in Spain, and the radical poetics of the Futurists, the Dadaists and the Surrealists, and they went on to create if not a single international style then certainly a style which has some common links and threads. And it is the style of those first post-modernists which has been discovered and used to remarkable advantage by a generation of contemporary American poets.

Another Republic, edited by Charles Simic and Mark Strand, gathers together 17 European and South American writers under a single international roof. All of the writers have been translated into English in the past decade, usually for the first time, and most were born between the years of 1909 and 1924, thus coming of age in a world already broken apart by the First World War. There are exceptions of course; Fernando Pessoa, the great Portuguese poet who wrote under three distinct heteronyms, rightly belongs to the era of modernism, and the French fabulist Henri Michaux and that anti-poetic essayist Francis Ponge span the two eras like colorful beacons. Most of the writers included are poets or anti-poets although Julio Cortházar, famous for his short story "Blow Up" and his novel *Hopscotch*, and the Italian novelist and short story writer Italo Calvino, are known for and committed to their experiments in prose fiction. In fact, no single generalization will serve for the writers of *Another Republic* although, divested of that disclaimer, it is possible to cite some of the stylistic touchstones which they have in common. For, *Another Republic* is a polemical anthology; many of its poems and poets seem chosen to exhibit and illustrate the foundations and parameters of what Mark Strand, in a 1972 interview, called a new international style. Or to reformulate, it is representative in the sense that it attempts to present a cosmology, admittedly a subjective one, of a particular historical period, and polemical in the sense that it wants to determine what that cosmology should be; a dangerous formulation of anyone who is committed, as I am, to the notion that it is the obligation of every poet to define his own tradition and to write only those poems which he or she can write.

Yet many of the ideas and assumptions of the writers of that other Republic (and by implication, the esthetics of a generation of American poets, and certainly of Simic and Strand themselves) seem the logical developments of a poetic built out of, and reacting to, modernism. A formulation of its basic tenets might look something like this: 1) An intense distrust of traditonal poetic rhetoric. Most of these poets, for example, have dispensed with metrical conventions, and there is a high preponderance of prose poems. 2) A narrative simplicity and flatness of diction at the opposite extreme of, say, the surface tensions and ambiguities so painstakingly worked out by the New Critics. (Hence the idea that poems exist somewhere underneath the words and that poetry is what is retained in translation, a playful and dramatic reversal of Robert Frost's famous dictum.) 3) A heavy reliance on Surrealist technique, particularly image and metaphor. 4) A suggestion that poets, even those rooted to a particular time and place, have been restored to their ancient roles as myth makers. 5) And finally, as the editors say of Jean Follain, the sense that poets can and perhaps ought "to restore the most commonplace event to its strangeness and endow it with an almost cosmic resonance." Or, to infer an Ars Poetica, the Poundian "Make It New" has been exchanged for "Restore Its Mystery And Strangeness."

There are some wonderful examples of this new style in *Another Republic*. A reviewer might make his own little anthology of poems by Ponge ("The Pleasures of the Door"), Carlos Drummond De Andrade ("The Dirty Hand" and "Your Shoulders Hold Up The World"), Zbigniew Herbert ("Episode in a Library"), and Nicanor Parra ("I Take Back Everything I've Said"). Here is a poem by the Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai (translated by Assia Gutmann),

A Pity. We Were Such a Good Invention

They amputated
Your thighs off my hips.
As far as I'm concerned
They are all surgeons. All of them.

They dismantled us
Each from the other.
As far as I'm concerned
They are all engineers. All of them.

A pity. We were such a good
And loving invention.
An airplane made from a man and wife.
Wings and everything.
We hovered a little above the earth.

We even flew a little.

This poem is remarkable for its directness and profound simplicity, its unique mixture of the erotic and the political, its subtle tone of outrage and nostalgia. Because it has brought together poems like these *Another Republic* will continue to resonate beyond the political boundaries of this and other Republics.

Edward Hirsch

Edward Hirsch is a poet and free-lancer.

Reconsideration

The Mackerel Plaza by Peter DeVries

The Reverend Mackerel is at work in the study, composing a new chapter of his book *Maturity Comes of Age*, when an ominous billboard rises into sight through the window: green and orange phosphorescent lettering that unashamedly declares, "Jesus Saves." Taken aback by this affront (as Mackerel himself might say), he flies to his telephone to register a complaint with the Zoning Board of Avalon, Connecticut, and almost at once finds himself embroiled in theological argument with the Board's Miss Calico. "What does the Apostle Paul say?" she asks worriedly.

"I have no idea," replies Mackerel, "But Oscar Wilde reminds us that while crime is not vulgar, vulgarity is a crime." And thus prodded he unwinds a lengthy speech on his favorite subject, a grafting of Freud and Auden upon Christianity that stresses our duty, not to be saved, but to *evolve*.

"Put it under the phone book so it

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won't blow away," says Miss Calico at the end, evidently addressing a fellow worker in the office, and poor Mackerel is left puffing into the mouthpiece like a beached whale.

The Mackerel Plaza, first published in 1958, is at once Peter DeVries' funniest and most characteristic novel, the loveliest jewel in the whole remarkable strand of his achievement. Immensely successful among mere readers, De Vries' work has been conspicuously overlooked by academicians and by the more solemn ideologists of contemporary literature. What he offers, however, that is missing from such celebrities as Thomas Pynchon or John Hawkes are modesty, humor, warmth, intelligibility. What he may be thought to lack in comparison is high seriousness (and perhaps a certain gratuitous obscurity). Like all genuinely funny writers, De Vries lulls our critical instincts. Nonetheless he projects a vision no less complete, no less interesting, no less insistent for being also comic.

The opening of *The Mackerel Plaza*, for example, sets briskly in motion a number of themes—the forward-thinking, back-sliding minister; the collision of literary styles like billboards and sermons; the irritably rational communication of males undercut by women; the displacement of religious values by what he elsewhere calls "Freudianity"—and as the book proceeds, we realize, they continue to swim mysteriously in and out of view, circling constantly and effortlessly, like fish in a bowl. Most followers will recognize these themes as typically DeVriesian. In particular, the thwarted conversation between Mackerel and Miss Calico (whom naturally he wishes to marry) calls to mind any number of other cases of masculine enthrallment to unlistening sirens, for if De Vries inherited the epic subject of the war between men and women from his mentor Thurber, he has gone on to wage it along lines inimitably his own. Where Thurber's women loom menacingly above his cowering males, shrewish commandos dressing down the cravenhearted, De Vries' women dominate more subtly. They allure, they fascinate, they contrive. Emphatically sex objects—"She was naked except for skin, blouse, underthings, stockings, and shoes," Mackerel observes—they provoke his men to involuntary, fatalistic wooing, and the plots of his novels tend to suggest *Walpurgisnacht* in suburbia, an off-beat but rhythmical dance of approaches and retreats.

His men like to court with language. Parodies, quotations, aphorisms are their plumage, and everyone thinks of DeVries' novels first in terms of their wisecracks: "She was a thin, frail bulldozer of a woman." "Horticulture is nine-tenths destruction." "He's one of those doctors that think ninety percent of their patients are quacks." But his women, despite their inattention, reveal an even more remarkable, perverse power of language, a malapropulsion that leaves the men gasping in alarmed admiration: a sexual free-lancer is "AM-FM"; according to Miss Calico's mother, "when we speak of putting down roots we don't mean sticking in the mud"; suicide is "not a viable alternative." And that mothers and mothers-in-law so often produce these clinches only underscores our impression that some earthy, exclusively female creativity is at work.

Moreover, these women often release in DeVries' men a stream of surrealistic fantasy that he likewise shares with Thurber. Miss Calico's mother reminds Mackerel of a cozy forest-creature out of the pages of Beatrix Potter:

> *I had again the conviction, this time almost overpowering, that I was four-footed and would spring down from the chair and follow her into the kitchen. There we would sit and talk of Mrs. Raccoon, who took in washing, and what Freddy Frog had said and how the Otters behaved at Mrs. Woodchuck's party. We would drink our tea while the sun came in the window or the rain pattered on the roof, and no harm would ever find us there.*

The other-worldliness of such women suggests one reason why DeVries' men fail to find common ground with them. It also suggests how closely women are associated with the religious turmoil that permeats his novels. Mackerel's role as the progressive clergyman of the People's Liberal Church, after all, where divorce is a sacrament and the "worship area" is tucked away discreetly in a corner, emblemizes another frustrated relationship with a baffling, unworldly force. Like all DeVriesian protagonists, he divides his time between wrangles over salvation and repentance and the pursuit of fluff. And like all of them, he is continually wandering into one kind of unfaithfulness or another.

The wisecracks, too, may be associated with DeVries' religious musings. Their unusual condensation, their zany luxuriance remind us that in Freudianity jokes are like dreams, which clear our way briefly, tantalizingly into forbidden

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areas of consciousness. Puns, jokes, fantasies and dreams are momentary, inconstant structures imposed upon the ordinary real world, as Mackerel might philosophize; they organize it temporarily much as religion organizes our world and intermittently gives it meaning. (Both jokes and religion have a way of being misunderstood, of course. "Let us hope," Mackerel prays during a season of floods, "that a kind Providence will put a speedy end to the acts of God under which we have been laboring.") DeVries' striking habit of metaphor, a figure of speech that reconciles incongruities—he "popped from the door like a slice of bread from a toaster"—further impresses us with how deeply his concern for organization, for design, reaches, and how fragile such order necessarily is. Similarly, his plots curl gracefully, confidently through their serpentine complications, only to break free at the end with a gasp, dashing past us like a hare from the woods. *The Mackerel Plaza* concludes with a miracle—rain in answer to the town's prayer—so flashy, so meretricious that it robs Mackerel of his faith in a civilized, non-existent God. "They'll say it was a weak thing," his housekeeper remarks, "that not even a miracle could save it." But "it's just the other way around," he answers. "It was so strong it took a miracle to crush it."

Like most modern comic novels, *The Mackerel Plaza* grows less and less funny toward the end. The drama of Mackerel's defrocking makes us squirm; public disgrace, paranoia, even accusations of murder darken the scene; an interview between Mackerel and his doctor in the People's Liberal psychiatric clinic creates the same dimly humorous unease we feel at Malvolio's imprisonment in *Twelfth Night*. DeVries lacks that offhand kind of seriousness which permits Auden to remark casually somewhere that God is a bore. His sense of potential disaster gives his humor, like Evelyn Waugh's and sometimes Kingsley Amis', an indistinct quality of apprehension. *The Symposium* ended before Socrates could persuade his sleepy audience that "the genius of comedy was the same with that of tragedy," but our experience usually justifies the argument. There are signs of strain in most comic stories, dangers that are averted but not eliminated from our minds. (Some plays in the 17th century had reversible last acts and were performed on alternate days as tragedies and comedies!) Rare is the universe like P.G. Wodehouse's where the threats of comedy never slip their leash. DeVries' novels, however, are always turning imperceptibly into tragic ones, in which the laughing fates hunt down his characters remorselessly; not for nothing is he inclined to take his titles from Romantic poetry.

One novel makes the transition visibly. The catastrophes so tentative in the other books are not defused in *The Blood of the Lamb*, which, though it begins with the usual hilarity, slowly comes to tell of the last year of Don Wanderhope's daughter, 11 years old, who dies of leukemia. "In tragic story," Lionel Trilling reminds us, "men are first vulnerable not in their abstract humanity but in the particular commitments of their lives." Comic heroes lack just this sense of commitment. Typically, like Mackerel the anti-minister or Bertie Wooster in flight among the Drones, they are always playing at, posturing carelessly. *The Blood of the Lamb* surprises and then moves us because it displays a comic figure who *is* commited, to his role as father of a daughter, and such vulnerability opens him to real, not comic pain. Wanderhope scans the jacket of a book meant to comfort, entitled *Zen: The Answer?*, with its picture of the author trimming gardenias. In Imagination

I boarded a train to California, in one or another of whose hanging gardens the wise man dwelt, and bearding him there, asked whether there were any order of wisdom by which the sight of flowers being demolished could be readily borne. "Watch," I said, and tore from a branch the most perfect of his blossoms and mangled it into the dirt with my heel. Then I tore another, then another, watching studiously his expression as I ground the white blossoms underfoot . . .

DeVries' most characteristic effect is of detonation, of order flung violently apart—an effect found not simply in the tension of his inimitable wisecracks, but also in the explosions with which this beautiful book subsides.

But *The Mackerel Plaza* concludes in safety, in a classic renewal through marriage and, bringing its two major themes together, an ironic comparison of a designing woman and a designing God. And if Mackerel has lost his faith (a matter no more serious, he confesses, than losing a wooden leg in an accident), like every husband he has gained a mystifying and irrepressible goddess: "Her body against me was like a bursting star."

Max Byrd

Max Byrd is professor of English at the University of California at Davis and the editor most recently of *Daniel Defoe: A Collection of Critical Essays* (Prentice-Hall).

The Back of the Book

One More Piece on Barbara Walters

Walter Cronkite, when he first learned of Barbara Walters' famous job, is supposed to have suffered "the sickening sensation that we were all going under, that all our efforts to hold network television news aloof from show business had failed." Exactly whose efforts he referred to can hardly mean all TV newsmen since TV news has been show business from the days of Douglas Edwards and John Cameron Swayze. The effort to find a face and voice at once earnest and responsible according to the most superficial expectations of earnestness and responsibility; to create a figure poised perfectly between the clergy and police; to present someone in whom all inferences of humor, athleticism, decency and stability might be drawn on no or slight evidence; in short, to give a medium without Clark Gable its own American hero—what is such work but show business? If Cronkite has forgotten that he is an actor, then he merely has become his given role. In fact the studied correctness of his comment on Walters would suggest just that.

None of this, however, lets Walters off the hook. There is no question that

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her brand of show business is quite different from the Howard K. Smiths, Frank Reynoldses, John Dalys, Huntleys, Brinkleys, Chancellors, Cronkites, *et al.*; quite different indeed from that of her own "co-anchor," Harry Reasoner, who seems as comfortable on camera with Walters as a governor under indictment; and, in my view, that hers is a much less attractive act than her forbears or competitors. But it is a mistake to criticize Walters in comparison to these others, who are to her as other backcourt men are (or were until the past few years) to Earl Monroe. As Ralph Ellison's *Invisible Man* says of Louis Armstrong, Walters has her own sense of timing. She is changing our conception of news—I believe, for worse.

An item in "The Ear," the gossip column of *The Washington Star*, recently disclosed that Walters does an excellent imitation of Barbra Streisand. Exciting as this information would be under any circumstances, it becomes particularly interesting when we consider that the first of Walters' "specials" for ABC will be on Streisand and Jon Peters, a man with the enviable dual profession of film producer and hairdresser. If the interview with this couple goes well, Walters hopes that the second special will be with the new President of the United States, of whom she may also do an imitation. Such interviews are her strength. In her way she is as good at them as Edward R. Murrow was on "Person to Person." She automatically discerns the proper level of intimacy; asks questions that encourage expansive, sometimes errant, talk; assumes a stance of deliberate unimportance relative to her subject so that the subject inevitably compensates on her behalf, and elevates Walters to higher ground than the interviewee.

This is the same method Walters uses on the news. Her first two programs centered on her interviews with Anwar Sadat, interviews in which we were aware of nothing as significant as the familiar relationship of Walters and the president of Egypt. Whatever Sadat had to say was above all else a function of that relationship, so that when on a number of occasions he addressed Walters as Bar-ba-ra, it seemed a culmination of the substance of his remarks. On the second evening Sadat concluded by asking Walters how she liked her million-dollar job, adding that his own yearly salary was $12,000. Walters responded that Sadat had better perqs (unlikely), and there were smiles all 'round, although Reasoner looked less tickled than crazed.

Is the Sadat interview news? It depends on what we want to learn. If you agree with Henry Fairlie (*Encounter*, May 1971) that when you turn on the news you "want dull bits of information: little dull-dull-dull facts," and not impressions, then the Walters-Sadat exchange will at least seem baffling. However, if you think of the news as an early evening talk show where public figures are celebrities, insincerely called "guests," then this approach may eventually out-do the talk shows. Walters' model, acknowledged or not, is Sherman Billingsly, of happy memory, who used to traipse about the Stork Club in the '50s, bearing images of paradise as he table-hopped. So Walters taking history as chit-chat, brings us not merely the powerful and glorious, but herself, the eternal Bar-ba-ra, stationed between our ordinariness and the extraordinariness out there. We watch her on a screen, and she in turn watches glamor on a screen within; and she can talk with glamor, which knows her name.

"From when I first opened my eyes I have realized that my place isn't here where I am, but where I'm not, and never have been" (Octavio Paz, "Hurry"). Something of that is in the appeal of these interviews, and in great quantity according to the Nielsens. To be someplace else, and instantly, is almost a rational imperative where speed is the central element of civilization. Since the idea that elsewhere is home is the *raison d'être* of television generally, why should the news not capitalize on such a feeling? This is the *raison d'être* for Walters too, or part of it.

But something less abstract is happening here as well. In her opening night apologia, reminiscent of Citizen Kane's "statement of principles" (an apologia decried as "unprofessional" by some observers, but which seemed to me inspired in giving both pro-and anti-Walters fanatics precisely what they longed for), Walters said: "Harry and I will bring you the essential information you need to cope with the world today." An interesting promise, not just because it plays on the cliché, "cope," but because Walters and by association, Reasoner, and undoubtedly many other TV newsmen, may actually believe that "coping" is the best one can do with "the world today." Someone might advise these

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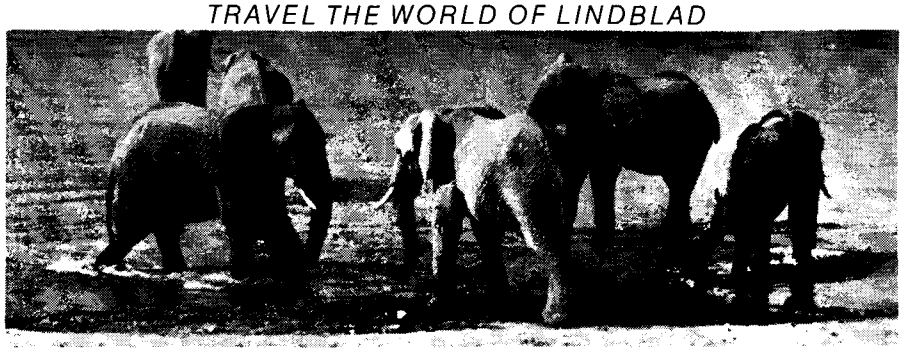

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people that the world is only a battleground sometimes, that life is more complicated than survival. Of course, the notion of coping as philosophy has one great advantage for television; one need (better) not think too seriously about the life one copes with.

Such a life in fact may best be represented in pictures, so that you know your enemy or ally—since the world is so divided—when you see him. When you see him big as life, engaged in semi-formal conversations, you have "the essential information you need." Nothing he says will impress you as much as his saying it to Bar-ba-ra, face to face to face. His glasses, pipe and hair-cut become facts, and create an impression, making knowledge conveniently vague and accessible to one's infallible intuitions. Now go ahead and cope.

If the idea of experience as strife were meant sincerely it would be false enough. When it is simply a toy idea, conceived as advertising, it is cynical as well. But it sure is pretty—which is why the Walters interviews probably will not only drive Harry Reasoner off the air, but may set the style for all network news, now contemplating a full hour instead of half-hour format. One might worry about that more than Walters' millions. Her act is cheap at any price.

Roger Rosenblatt

Correspondence

McCarthy Right or Wrong

To the editors:

The New Republic's gratuitous slap at Americans for Democratic Action in its September 25 lead editorial ("Hovering Presence") is puzzling if not perverse, since ADA has advised citizens to vote for Jimmy Carter and not for Eugene McCarthy, a course of action which the writer of the editorial apparently also recommended. From the ill-tempered tone of the editorial one assumes you have decided that you must support Carter and this reality irritates you, since you attack any number of others who agree with your position.

Let's get history straight. ADA was the first national organization to endorse Sen. McCarthy in 1968. Hubert Humphrey—whose contributions to the nation, the Democratic party and ADA were infinitely greater than McCarthy's—was wrong on the single towering issue of the time, US involvement in the Vietnam war. To his everlasting honor it must be said: McCarthy was right on that issue in 1968.

He is not, in our judgment, right in 1976. Liberals, for several substantial reasons, should not give him their support this year, and only one of those reasons is the fact that he could throw the election to Ford. Here is another: McCarthy opposes tax reform, saying, "I helped write much of the present code." And he did. That should be enough to disqualify him for liberal support today. But if you or your readers want more reasons, I will be glad to supply them.

Leon Shull
National Director
Americans for Democratic Action

Carter Pro or Con

To the editors:

I want to thank you for the article "Defending Carter's Heresies," (*TNR*, October 9). At last, I understand Carter—and I shall vote for him and support him.

The New Republic has been publishing good Carter material, both critical and favorable. This article has been particularly helpful to me and my family.

William Grisham
Evanston, Illinois

The Classifieds

Personals

OUR WORLD WELCOMES MARGARITA (Sarah) BORDA FLEENER. Debut - October 4, 1976 at a healthy 9 lb. 5 oz.

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COMPANIONABLE, INTELLIGENT Chicago man, 50, enjoys arts, ideas and issues, outdoors. Wants to meet similar, interested woman in her forties. New Republic Box 7805

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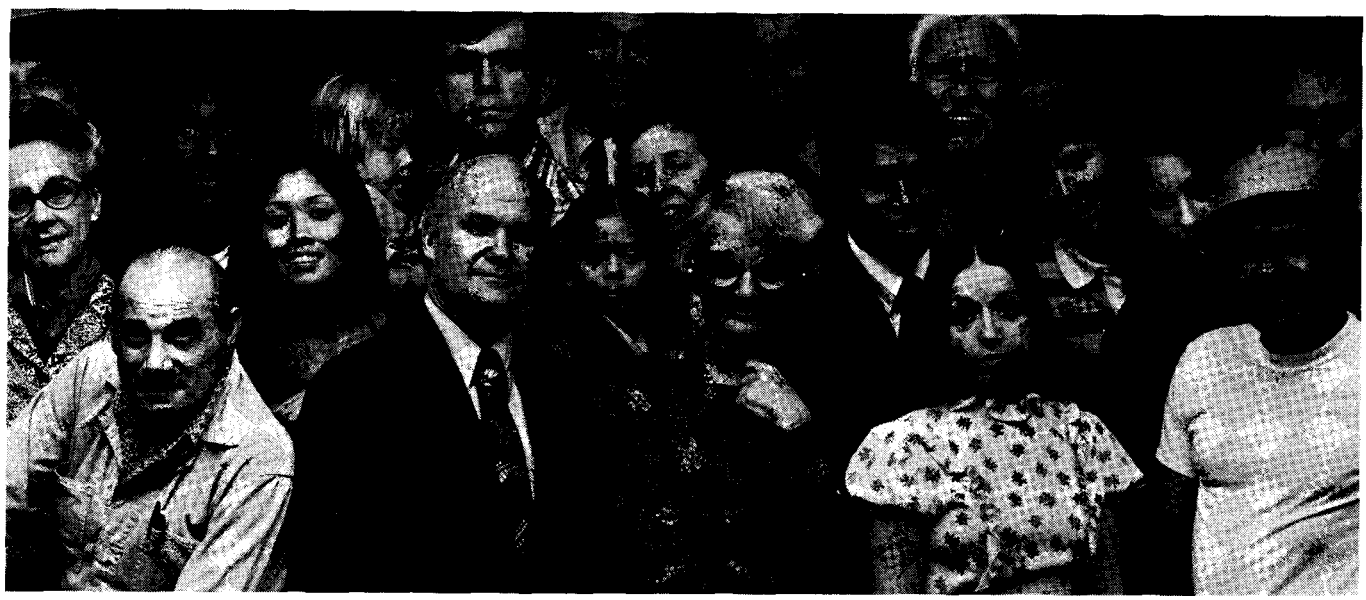

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